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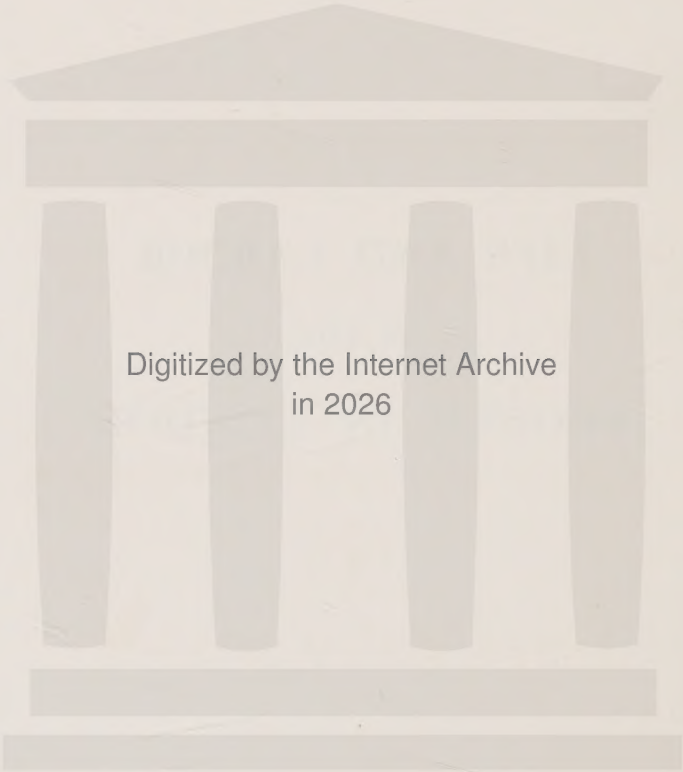
# LIFE AND LABOUR

OF THE

# PEOPLE IN LONDON



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# LIFE AND LABOUR

OF THE

# PEOPLE IN LONDON

BY

CHARLES BOOTH

ASSISTED BY

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*Third Series: Religious Influences*

## INNER SOUTH LONDON

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# INNER SOUTH LONDON

*Date of the Inquiry in this District:* 1899-1900

# CHAPTER I

# WEST SOUTHWARK AND NORTH LAMBETH

## § 1

### INTRODUCTORY

In reviewing London north of the Thames the plan adopted has been to work from East to West on an outer and again on an inner line, ending first at Hampstead and then on the river bank at Fulham. Dealing with South London I propose to reverse this order by beginning with Southwark and the Central South, and proceeding on an outer line from West to East back to the river at Greenwich; and so by working round the central parts I hope to perfect a lens of observation which shall gradually bring all into one focus.

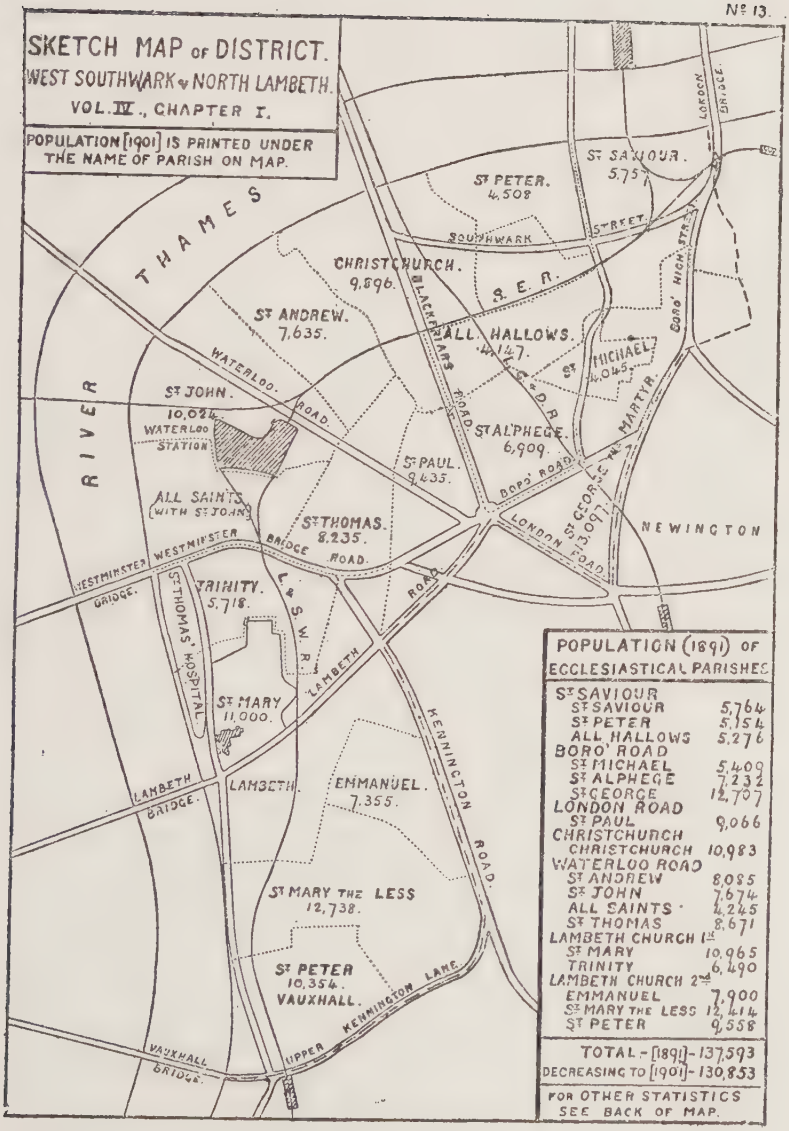
South London is different from North, and it is desirable at this point—at the crossing of the river—to make something of a fresh start. The differences between North and South London lie deep. They are historical and physical in origin, but are industrial, social and moral in result; and are not very fully understood; while some things are different which might well be the same, there are others which are the same though they might well be different.

The following passage from an Historical Souvenir of the old Borough Road Baptist Chapel, founded in

1673, indicates in picturesque language the physical and social conditions of the past that help to explain some of the characteristics of Central South London to-day :—

"Southwark lies low; the greater part being some six inches beneath the level of the Thames. In early days, from the river to the Clapham and Brixton hills, it was largely swamp and marsh. Islets were dotted here and there rising from the ooze and mud. Dark straggling forests abounded. To these retreats outlaws, debtors, thieves and rascals of every breed resorted; laying for Southwark the foundation of that questionable character it has never wholly lost. Later, when the marsh-land was drained and buildings sprang up, the quarter called 'the Mint' fulfilled the functions of these pestilent haunts. Originally a refuge for insolvents, it soon became a settlement for the vilest refuse of humanity. Deeds of darkness were committed with terrible frequency. Violence and murder were no uncommon events. The names of the surrounding localities—'Labour-in-vain Alley,' 'Hangman's Acre,' 'Dirty Lane' and 'Revels Row' testify to ancient ill-repute." Some shadows of this past still rest upon the inner ring of London south of the Thames.

The Central South London district, which is the subject of this and the succeeding chapters, might in a general way be called Southwark, but it is a good deal more extensive than the new Borough which now bears that name. The district covered by the present volume extends from Lambeth to Rotherhithe and includes the whole of the poor and populous regions of Walworth and Bermondsey. It lies between two great bends of the river and is thus bounded by water on three sides. To a stranger the first impression is that of a net-work of wide thoroughfares starting from the bridges and meeting to form again fresh centres of




| POPULATION (1891) OF ECCLESIASTICAL PARISHES | |
|---|---|
| St SAVIOUR | |
| St SAVIOUR | 5,764 |
| St PETER | 5,154 |
| ALL HALLOWS | 5,276 |
| BORO' ROAD | |
| St MICHAEL | 5,400 |
| St ALPHEGE | 7,232 |
| St GEORGE | 12,707 |
| LONDON ROAD | |
| St PAUL | 9,066 |
| CHRISTCHURCH | |
| CHRISTCHURCH | 10,983 |
| WATERLOO ROAD | |
| St ANDREW | 8,085 |
| St JOHN | 7,674 |
| ALL SAINTS | 4,245 |
| St THOMAS | 8,671 |
| LAMBETH CHURCH 1st | |
| St MARY | 10,965 |
| TRINITY | 6,490 |
| LAMBETH CHURCH 2nd | |
| EMMANUEL | 7,900 |
| St MARY THE LESS | 12,414 |
| St PETER | 9,558 |
| TOTAL - [1891] - 137,593 | |
| DECREASING TO [1901] - 130,853 | |

FOR OTHER STATISTICS SEE BACK OF MAP.

# STATISTICS *bearing on the* AREA INCLUDED IN SKETCH MAP NO. 13. *Described in Chapter I. (Vol. IV.).*

## CENSUS STATISTICS.

*Showing Increase or Decrease of Population.*

| Population in | | | | Decrease per cent. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1881. | 1891. | 1896. | 1901. | 1881-1891. | 1891-1901. |
| 135,896 | 129,648 | 129,608 | 125,881 | 4·60 % | 4·27 % |

*Density of Population.*

| 1891. | 1901. |
|---|---|
| Persons per Acre. | |
| 165·6 | 159·5 |
| Inhabited Houses. | |
| 14,497 | 12,580 |
| Persons per House. | |
| 8·9 | 10·0 |
| Number of Acres. | |
| 783 | |

*Age and Sex in* 1891.

| Age. | Males. | Females. | Together. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Under 5 years | 8,358 | 8,340 | 16,698 |
| — 15 ,, | 13,724 | 13,522 | 27,246 |
| — 20 ,, | 6,402 | 5,625 | 12,027 |
| — 25 ,, | 6,324 | 5,937 | 12,261 |
| — 35 ,, | 11,343 | 10,545 | 21,888 |
| — 45 ,, | 8,476 | 7,915 | 16,391 |
| — 55 ,, | 5,771 | 5,532 | 11,303 |
| — 65 ,, | 3,368 | 3,372 | 6,740 |
| 65 and over | 2,329 | 2,765 | 5,094 |
| Totals ... | 66,095 | 63,553 | 129,648 |

NOTE.—The area of the Sketch Map includes three Registration sub-districts of Southwark—St. Saviour, Christchurch and Borough Road—and three similar districts of Lambeth—Waterloo Road, Lambeth Church First and Lambeth Church Second (excluding St. Philip's Parish). It also includes the ecclesiastical parish of St. Paul (London Road), but the figures for this parish are here omitted, and those for St. Philip's included. Thus the figures correspond closely with the area of the sketch map; although, here as elsewhere, our statistics are affected by minor alterations which have been made in the boundaries of the district under the London Government Act (1899). For detailed statement of the Special Family Enumeration see Appendix.

## SPECIAL ENUMERATION for this INQUIRY (1891).

*Sex, Birthplace and Industrial Status of Heads of Families.*

| Sex. | | Birthplace. | | Industrial Status. | | | Total Heads. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male. | Female. | In London. | Out of London. | Employers | Employees | Neither. | |
| 24,747<br>82 % | 5,474<br>18 % | 17,014<br>56 % | 13,207<br>44 % | 1,815<br>6 % | 23,306<br>77 % | 5,100<br>17 % | 30,221<br>100 % |

*Constitution of Families.*

| Heads. | Others Occupied. | Unoccupied. | Servants. | Total in Families. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 30,221<br>(1·0) | 26,554<br>(·88) | 64,538<br>(2·13) | 1,085<br>(·04) | 122,398<br>(4·05) |

Social Classification according to *Rooms Occupied* or *Servants Kept.*

| | Persons. | Per Cent. | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 or more persons to a room | 10,715 | 8·3 | Crowded 49·1 |
| 3 & under 4 ,, ,, | 16,105 | 12·4 | |
| 2 & ,, 3 ,, ,, | 36,780 | 28·4 | |
| 1 & ,, 2 ,, ,, | 32,172 | 24·8 | |
| Less than 1 person to a room | 3,268 | 2·5 | |
| Occupying more than 4 rooms | 18,146 | 14·0 | |
| 4 or more persons to 1 servant | 2,556 | 2·0 | Not Crowded 50·9 |
| Less than 4 persons to 1 servant & 4 to 7 persons to 2 servants | 1,202 | ·9 | |
| All others with 2 or more servants | 369 | ·3 | |
| Servants in families | 1,085 | ·8 | |
| Inmates of Institutions (including servants) | 7,250 | 5.6 | |
| Total | 129,648 | 100 | |
| Living in Poverty (as estimated in 1889) | | 46·8 % | 100 % |
| ,, in Comfort ( ,, ,, ) | | 53·2 % | |

radiation. Except for the lack of a central open space and some incompleteness of the riverside road (which however might be obviated by producing Bankside or Park Street to Tooley Street on the low level), the general arrangement, though fortuitous, could hardly be improved The second impression, resulting from more intimate knowledge, is that of a maze of small streets and courts crowded in many parts with a low-living population. These streets, set at every conceivable angle to each other, appear on our map like the stitches of embroidery filling in the ground-work of the pattern made by the crossing of the main thoroughfares. And a terrible embroidery it proves to be, as we look closer and closer into it: of poverty, dirt and sin.

There is decent and comfortable life to be found also in these little streets, and though the scenes encountered may at first almost exclude all thoughts except those of horror and pity, a true judgment must consider both good and bad.

This district forms a very large piece of London and in describing it I shall have to divide it into four or five portions. It will be seen as we proceed how far similarity reigns and where differences come in; and what are the peculiarities of South as compared with North London.

I begin at London Bridge and work westward to Lambeth and south to Vauxhall and Kennington; the eastern boundary of this part being the line of the Borough High Street and Newington as far as the Elephant and Castle and, further South, Kennington Road; then I deal with the great central district of Walworth; and thence I return once more to London Bridge and the parts which lie eastward of the Borough, Horsely Down and Bermondsey, finishing with Rotherhithe.

The coloured map of this entire district, which I have not seen my way to divide, will be found at page 170.

## § 2

### FROM THE BOROUGH TO BLACKFRIARS ROAD

There is in this part a great concentration of evil living and low conditions of life that strikes the imagination and leads almost irresistibly to sensational statement. It contains a number of courts and small streets which for vice, poverty, and crowding, are unrivalled in London, and as an aggregate area of low life form perhaps the most serious blot to be found on the whole of our map. Of all the cases that come from the large district covered by the Southwark Police Court more than half are from this section. The inhabitants are not incomers from elsewhere, but mainly South Londoners born and bred. They are the dregs of this, not the scum of any other population.

Although greatly reduced and becoming rapidly less in quantity by demolitions, the palm for degradation was, at the time of our inquiry, still to be given to the group of old courts lying between Red Cross Street and the Borough High Street. Revisiting them after an interval of ten years, I brought away the same black picture, the same depression of soul, as on the first occasion ; the only relief being due to the destruction of some, and the only hope the prospective destruction of the rest. Those who live in these courts are neither all bad nor all poor, but to a great extent they are both ; the men are waterside labourers and market porters and others of the lowest

casual and loafing class, including thieves and the bullies who live on the earnings of prostitutes. Of this spot I have the following note written by one of my secretaries: "Women with draggled skirts slouch by, their shawls over their heads. Undergrown men hang about. As I passed along three women stood gossiping on a doorstep; one of them was suckling a child openly with bare breasts. She showed no shyness. All were of the lowest type. Many evil faces, and a deformed boy with naked twisted leg completed the picture." There is always a chance (say the police) of a salutation from some window by brickbat or a pail of slops, and it would be a bad look out, they add, 'for anyone the worse for drink who might stumble in, or be brought in, at night. He would surely be robbed of everything and be lucky if he escaped unhurt.' Such opportunities are the prizes of prostitution here, and the economic justification of the bully, for and with whom the woman lives. Into such quarters the police do not go unless they must, and then not singly: but it is right to add that for any sober, self-respecting passer by there is no likelihood of offence. Our own visits at night produced nothing more sensational than in the day.

The character of these places varies somewhat in detail, but in general it is lowness and wickedness that impress here rather than poverty: and the lowest depths of degradation are found in the registered common lodging-houses, which are still numerous. There are some children, but not so many as elsewhere; those seen seemed to be sufficiently fed, though ill-clothed and dirty.

The courts off the Borough High Street stand out as being in some ways pre-eminently bad, but the group of small streets lying on either side of Friar Street, between Pocock Street and the Borough Road, are in two respects even more unsatisfactory, for not only is

the area there fully twice as large, but the evil is, and has been, increasing both in extent and degree. It is probable that those driven from the one district reappear in the other; at any rate it is certain that the numbers concerned are greater and the conditions worse than ten years ago. And there seems to be little doubt that the measures adopted to relieve their poverty by the Church 'in possession' have aggravated the evil. These streets contain some of the worst blocks of so-called 'model' dwellings to be found anywhere in London; designed, it would almost seem, to concentrate every horror of low and vicious life.

The area of poverty and vice extends beyond the Elephant and Castle and also along part of both sides of Westminster Bridge Road, including in this direction, close to the Roman Catholic Cathedral, one of the blackest of the black streets; but, on the whole, as we pass South and West the industrial element, which is never absent, increases and becomes dominant. The people are still a rough class and 'do a good deal of singing before they go to bed,' with 'money enough for amusement, but nothing for their homes'; 'plenty at times and none at all at other times.' Many are costers, and as is generally the case where these people are found, partly because of their trade, there is much mess of paper and refuse littered about the streets, as well as the usual crusts of bread. Of children, hatless, with ragged clothing, too large or too small, there are here swarms. They generally look well enough fed, but are dirty and often sore-eyed.

The bulk of the inhabitants work as well as sleep in or near the district, and form one vast group of families whose lives are well known to one another. There is more street life here even than in the East End; more women gossiping at the doors; more children playing in the gutters. In some places there is almost village life. In Cornwall Place (said to

belong to the Duke) are many old tenants, who have lived there eighteen or twenty years. If they move it is from house to house. In one little court near by a boy of sixteen said that at various times he had lived in every house. This court, like those adjoining it, lacks the 'modern conveniences,' which a quarter of a century ago were less thought of than now. The houses have no coppers; the water must be boiled in a kettle and the washing done in a tub in the front yard. In St. Peter's parish near the river, Moss Alley and the surrounding courts form quite a little community, whilst St. Margaret's Court off the High Street furnishes another instance of the same sort, having shops of its own; and where it happens, as in several cases, that a number of houses have only one hydrant, the inhabitants might perhaps be described as meeting to gossip at the fountain.

It would seem that the district, as a whole, has gained little by the demolition of bad property within its borders, for the poorest and lowest cling most resolutely to the spot, merely shifting from one street to the next; and to some extent the area has certainly suffered from the additional crowding resulting from the clearances for railway or warehouse extension that have taken place in it. The process is going on from year to year. Site values rise, an advanced rent is demanded, and, by a paradox, the people leave in inverse proportion to their seeming ability to pay the advance—the rich going first, the poorest last. The same thing has happened in the City of London. There the rich went first, the middle class followed, and the poor still linger in parts; in Southwark the rich have gone, the fairly comfortable are leaving, while the poor remain, and will remain till evicted. This general rule applies to a still larger area than that we are now considering, and when so applied has compensations which do not appear here. In other parts there is levelling up as

well as levelling down; here it is not easy to trace the improvement which should follow when the poorest, whose houses are destroyed, move into the quarters abandoned by the better off.

The work of the religious bodies in this section demands rather detailed treatment, in view of the attention that has been called to the subject of irreligion in South London.

St. Saviour's Church is about to become a cathedral. It already has that character in its services and organization, and though for the present still serving the double purpose of cathedral and parish church, it hardly pretends to grapple seriously with local needs. This edifice was till a few years ago an old-fashioned Evangelical place of worship, with a 'three-decker pulpit,' galleries and high pews; but, having a very stately interior, has well repaid an expenditure of about £100,000, and, as cathedral church of Southwark, will doubtless fill a place in meeting the individual religious needs of many Londoners who do not care to associate themselves with the work of a parish, or to subject their lives to parochial discipline, however mildly exercised. A religious utility of a similar character is found in the services of some of the City churches, and most of all in St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey.

The population of the parish is decreasing, and some rearrangement will probably be made so that its remaining inhabitants may be attached to one or other of the adjacent parish churches. Nearly all are poor, and many are very poor. A mission service is held in Red Cross Street, in the centre of low life here; but it is very badly attended. 'Young curates, full of enthusiasm, expect great things; but these great results don't come.' The people are described as being 'uninstructed,' as 'believing vaguely in the doctrines

of the Christian religion,' and as looking to be married in church, and so forth, while 'at the hour of death they are resigned and ready to go, satisfied with a few simple religious phrases for comfort.' This easy condition of mind, it is suggested, may be connected with the very vagueness of their religious ideas. 'Their faith, so far as it goes, is childlike.' The Church is in touch with the people to some extent by visitation, and old parochial charities are administered, which are of considerable amount, and now take principally the form of pensions. It is probably to women chiefly, and very likely to pensioners, that the above remarks on the religious attitude may be applied.

Amongst the humblest and roughest, if not the lowest, of the population in this neighbourhood, are a considerable number of Roman Catholics of Irish blood, and to gather in these half-lost sheep a Catholic church has been built. The priest in charge has worked here ten years, three before and seven since the church was built; but the courts, where the bulk of his people live, are among those scheduled for destruction. The ground on which he works is undermined, and it is doubtful if many, or even any, of his flock will occupy the new model dwellings which it is said may be erected. More likely they will drift further East, clinging to the river side, and thus this church may be left high and dry.*

The claims of their religion, and the authority of the priests, are readily recognised by these people. They attend in considerable numbers the services of the Mass in their bare, but very striking church, with its curious canopied altar; and they are willing to put in the windows of their houses notices of special services, a very effective plan of showing which (if

* The courts referred to in the above paragraph are now (1902) almost all gone.

any) religious body is 'in possession.' The priests have an intimate knowledge of life as led in these low districts. Drink, betting, and the grip of the moneylender are mentioned as the principal social difficulties; poverty, due to lack of earning-power, comes after. The men are unskilled labourers and riverside workers; the women are employed in the jam and sweet factories, or at fur-pulling in their homes, a most objectionable kind of work, but 'their living.' Drink is the greatest evil, but is not increasing, whereas the habit of betting is, and small money-lenders thrive. It is said that one may be found in every court, and it is even stated that the most decent homes, where the surrounding ones are bad, are maintained in this way. The customary rate of interest is one penny per shilling per week. The loan is personal; no security is given, the power to 'make things unpleasant' being relied on to prevent evasion.

Thus earnings are forestalled and clipped, wasted in drink and lost in betting, and poverty results—irregular earnings leading to an irregular life; or an irregular life to irregular earnings; bad health as a cause or a consequence; women working for low pay, comfortless homes, and drink first or last. Who shall straighten out this tangle? What *rôle* can religion play in the cure of these evil conditions?

The people we are told are 'too poor for Dissent,' but mission work goes on. A London City missionary has worked here sixteen years, mainly among the market porters. The casually employed slip through his fingers, for 'if lifted up to-day they are down again to-morrow.' Still, there has been in his time a great change; bad language, he says, is not habitual in the market to the extent it used to be, and there is less drunkenness. The established residents in his district, amongst whom are some brewery pensioners,

are not extremely poor. They include a number of widows whose wants are supplied by charities.

North of Southwark Street Barclay and Perkins' great brewery dominates the district and is helpful. It supports a special mission and missionary of its own, besides being on cordial terms with others. It encourages teetotalism in a very practical way among its employees, by paying 6*s* a week more to those who do not take their allowance of beer. One of the missionaries tells us that most of the employees are teetotalers, which, if it is true, is very remarkable.

In the adjoining parish of St. Peter, as in St. Saviour's, houses are giving way to business premises and the population is diminishing, but without much decrease in the amount of poverty. The people here are more entirely of *bonâ fide* working class, and some of the best of them are touched by the religious influence of the Church, which is here an active parochial agency. For others she does what she can, finding much indifference—an indifference admittedly increased by the association of religion with relief.

But though the receipt of charitable assistance may conduce to apathy, charitable effort has the opposite effect; and may be used to rouse an enthusiasm of humanity which shall lead men to God. Class feeling, which is usually accounted a standing difficulty to the Church, may thus be converted from a stumbling block into a support. Milliners will not associate with factory girls in their clubs, but they may be ready to teach in a Sunday school; and the factory girls themselves might in their turn be willing to work for the benefit of those still lower than themselves in the social scale.

The Grove Mission, connected with the Wesleyans, but managed independently, has shown, among others, how this class-exclusiveness may be turned to good account. This mission is stamped by the individuality

of its superintendent, who has held his position, unpaid, for twenty-five years, and who is one of the managers at the brewery. The work is all voluntary and to this feature its success is attributed. The mission is in effect a working-class church, which, with some financial assistance from outside, undertakes philanthropic work. The two things are distinct in so far that those who receive the gifts are not those who fill the hall on Sunday. A week-day service specially intended for the poor does not attract them in any considerable numbers. Thus as regards those who are recognised as 'the poor' this attempt is neither more nor less successful than others. The mission teaches the children and is the centre of the usual mixture of social and religious activities coupled with the expenditure on the subsidising of poor households of a good deal of money collected from neighbouring business firms. Its interest lies in the fact that those who here satisfy their religious aspirations, and from whom most of the workers are drawn, belong undoubtedly to the class which is commonly reported as being entirely indifferent to religion.

At St. Peter's the work is conducted on rather Low Church lines. In the next parish, All Hallows', the ritual is High. The two are about equally successful. Both affect a certain portion of the respectable working classes, mainly young people, some of whom seem to be completely won, so as to make of the Church, whether High or Low, their religious home.

All Hallows' Church is a great bare edifice, beautifully proportioned and set out with Stations of the Cross which culminate in a Calvary, after the manner of Rome. A stranger entering would suppose himself in a church of that communion, except, indeed, for the rather small number of those who here attend the 'Service of the Mass.' The Sisters are from Clewer, and wear the nun-like garb of that order.

During the twenty-four years that have elapsed since All Hallows' Mission was started the district has greatly improved. It was in those days no less notorious for vice and crime than the districts to the south of it, and all were worse than they now are. Such scenes of shamelessness as occurred in the streets then would, it is said, hardly be credited; a remark which exactly reproduces Mr. Holland's statement as regards George Yard, Whitechapel. The improvement is in great measure due to demolition and to the wise rebuilding of property, undertaken by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and other improving landlords acting largely under the influence of Miss Octavia Hill. More must be done in the same direction, but already the tendency of the more respectable people to leave has been checked, and the closing of one very low music-hall is a sign of improved tone. There are, however, still complaints of larrikin terrorism.

The work of an energetic City missionary touches here a lower class, perhaps, than the Church; at any rate, we receive from him a somewhat worse account. The low, rough, drunken class of inhabitants who cling to the old houses, still befoul the neighbourhood; and according to this witness their brawls, making night hideous, disgust and tend to drive away the respectable occupiers of the new houses. With this missionary it is still an open question whether respectability or squalor is to prevail.

At St. Michael's, Lant Street, also, we find genuine religious work stamped with individuality: the individuality of the vicar. He can truly claim to have cleared out at least one black spot, for a disreputable common lodging-house is now the vicarage, and even the bugs have fled. The church is small, with a simple homely style of decoration. It has a fair Sunday congregation of local people, who are all poor, 'but

a very decent set,' says their friend, the vicar. Week-day services are conducted under difficulties, for no one is bribed to come, and practically no one attends except on Sunday.

The story of the work at St. Alphege is a story of the past, as the time of our inquiry (July, 1899) was for it a period of transition. Changes were impending, but up to that time the work was still carried forward on the lines of High Church practices, combined with the sensational appeals and great pretensions with which its name has become connected. The work has been very futile on the religious side, and on the social side positively mischievous. Huge sums have been raised by rather questionable means and spent none too wisely. There is a considerable and remarkable consensus of opinion that the evil conditions of the neighbourhood have been accentuated by the action of this church.

The district we are dealing with is completed by the territory left in charge of the mother parish church of St. George the Martyr, a long strip extending from Union Street to the Elephant and Castle. This church has a magnificently central position where (as happens also at the Elephant and Castle and again at the Obelisk) six roads meet.

The centre of traffic at which the church stands is also the centre of the greatest mass of poverty and low life in all London, for in addition to the locality which has just been described, lying to the north and west of the church—of which some of the courts off the Borough High Street are within the parish itself—there lies to the eastward an area equally large and even poorer, though not quite so debased, which I shall have to describe later. Only directly to the South are the conditions different. The position of St. George's Church is only central as regards a much larger area than the parish itself, the shape of which

is such that no very good centre is possible. The church, however, collects its congregation irrespective of parish boundaries, and devotes the energies of its organizations to parish work irrespective of church attendance, filling the mother-parish *rôle* satisfactorily, avoiding extremes, whether High or Low, and doing its work soberly and well for the benefit of all classes of its parishioners. The congregation is large, but it consists mainly of middle-class people.

The rector of this parish inherited the work in 1898 and has since then successfully maintained the active organization inaugurated by his predecessor. The following extracts from his report for the year 1900 may be taken as in some sense representing the point of view of a witness as well as that of a worker. He writes : "When we turn to the religious condition of the parish there is only one word to describe it, and that is depressing, almost hopelessly so. When I wrote my first Report, two years ago, I expressed the following opinion :—'There can be no doubt that in Southwark the Church (using the word in its widest sense) has lost its hold over the great bulk of the people, if, indeed, it ever had a hold at all ; thousands are living lives of practical heathenism.' . . . . . Two years of further experience have only confirmed me in that view so far as the mass of the people is concerned. At the same time I must bear ungrudging testimony to the unselfish and devoted labours of many Church workers, both men and women. There are clergy who work on year by year in the most hopeless surroundings, with marvellous courage and devotion, accomplishing at times encouraging results. There are ladies, too, who voluntarily undertake a life of unremitting and thankless toil on behalf of the moral and spiritual welfare of their less fortunate fellow creatures. The efforts of those who seek to raise the conditions of life in South London may

perhaps do more than is recognised . . . . . but the way to reach the poor of London with the Gospel has not yet been discovered. Religion in any real sense does not enter into the lives of the great bulk of the people here. . . . . They think it the proper thing to have their children baptized, marriages solemnized, and the burial service read in church, but anything further is generally conspicuous by its absence. The result is that a very small proportion ever attend any place of worship except on an occasion like a Harvest Festival or Watch Night Service." He adds that "the efforts made by well meaning and zealous people to attract congregations by brass bands, showy advertisements, extraordinary titles and sensational services seem only to emphasise the existing indifference."

The district covered by the parishes of St. George and St. Alphege is full of missions, but all are very small affairs. At four of them the services are undertaken by City missionaries. At another (where there is no one paid) the Hon. Secretary, who is the chief worker, is employed during the day as a grill cook in the City. The work by which he gains his living ends at 5 o'clock, and he spends at the mission, to which he owed his conversion, and in which he found his wife and helpmate, almost all his evenings and most of each Sunday. All the other helpers are busy people and most of them members (as he himself is) of Spurgeon's Tabernacle, this being one of the many missions which draw or have drawn their inspiration from that great centre.

The Missionaries paint a very black picture of the neighbourhood. Planted 'where the need is greatest,' they see the evils very constantly and at close quarters, and find it difficult if not impossible to interest the people—that is, these rough low people—in the Gospel they have to offer. Their success, so far as

they succeed, is in gathering together a few devoted helpers; some, perhaps, leaving Christian work elsewhere to take up this, but others drawn in from the world of poverty, indifference and sin, aroused, repentant, converted, saved, to the glory of God.

In all these missions the work among the children is the most satisfactory part, but, nevertheless, many children go to no Sunday school. Even in that respect the work is, therefore, incomplete, while in others it is unsatisfactory: the women attend the mothers' meetings for other than religious reasons; the men stand aside.

It seems hardly to be questioned that the charity dispensed by the missions here is mischievous in its effects, and again I will quote from the rector. "Against the definitely religious work done by and in these mission rooms I would not utter a single word. There is room enough in all conscience for every form of Christian activity in Southwark, but I do raise my emphatic protest against the wholesale pauperising which follows, unintentionally no doubt, from many of them. Either as a reward for, or to encourage and promote attendance at services, doles and gifts in money or kind are distributed often with a lavish hand with the most utter disregard of all sound principles of charity. As a result there are in this neighbourhood many who go from mission room to mission room for what they can pick up."

But the reckless giving of charity is not by any means confined to irresponsible missions. The churches complain of each other. Sisters are almost invariably beyond control in this matter. 'Incense and candlesticks don't matter,' said the most outspoken amongst the clergy here: 'The real question is relief. If that is put on a right basis the Church will do some good; if not, not.'

The sum expended on relief by the churches greatly exceeds that for which the missions, or at any rate, the minor missions, are responsible; but the amount is not the main point, and this witness speaks strongly of the necessity of a change of opinion amongst all those who deal in charity, 'so that it may be understood that people can be injured and not helped by sixpence,' referring no doubt to the doings of those whose lack of sympathy with the principles of charity organization is notorious. The clergy of the Establishment in this neighbourhood do for the most part accept these admirable principles in theory though often not adopting them in practice. It should, however, be said that unusual pains have been taken here, and not without success, to prevent the overlapping of charities, by the establishment of an association for the registration of relief — a kind of clearing-house to which most of the Established Churches and several of the Nonconformists transmit the names and addresses of those they assist—a plan that is excellent, but rather difficult to keep up. Southwark has many charitable endowments and the guardians give out-relief rather freely. There is thus great need for regulation.

Broadly, the last witness quoted is alarmed at the tone of the press about South London just now, in the matter of poverty and its relief. 'More money,' he agrees, 'is wanted, but should be spent on living agents,' an opinion that might perhaps be shared by the Baptist minister of a neighbouring chapel, who came here from Hackney, and was astonished at the degree of apparent poverty and actual wretchedness in the homes compatible, as it seemed, with very fair earnings.

The Salvation Army, as a religious body, is practically inoperative here, but is strongly represented on the social side by great establishments in Blackfriars

Road and Southwark Street for sheltering and dealing with the homeless and those who, whether they lack work or not, belong to the 'dosser' class. These agencies will be referred to later as forming part of the organization of the Social Wing of the Army.

In this district, too, is situated Mr. Fegan's Boys' Home, an undertaking which has had a success similar to, though on a smaller scale than, that of Dr. Barnardo; and in accordance, it would seem, with one of the laws which govern philanthropic effort, it, too, has been led into Evangelistic and general charitable work. Mr. Fegan was able to claim, by a rather careful drawing of the map, that within his area of operations there was no place of worship, but nevertheless his incursions have been objected to, and his doings disapproved by those established before him. His mission is one of those whose charities are most bitterly complained of as ill-considered. There may be some grounds for these complaints, but there is certainly evidence of care, and it may be hoped that experience will teach its lesson, at any rate before much mischief is done.

Although churches, chapels, and missions, all included, affect but a small proportion of the population, it would be false to speak of Christianity as not being 'in possession,' in any sense in which this is not true equally of other parts of London occupied by similar classes.

In what sense London may be called 'poverty stricken' I have tried to gauge in many ways; so, too, in our present inquiry we are gradually realizing in what sense London is 'a heathen city.' Even this black portion of Central South London is no more heathen than many other parts of the metropolis, though it and the adjoining district eastward taken together are, as I have said, a degree more squalid

than any other part of equal extent, and reach the bottom level of degradation and low life.

In Blackfriars Road, barely within the limits of our present district, stood the 'old Surrey Chapel' where Rowland Hill once preached. The building remains, but is now used for commercial purposes. The chapel has two successors ; that in direct spiritual line being Newman Hall's beautiful church in Westminster Bridge Road, the ministry of which Mr. Meyer has recently resigned (1902). The other, which retains the original name, is in the hands of the Primitive Methodists. To this body the old building passed when quitted by Newman Hall; but on the termination of the lease it ceased to be used for religious purposes, and after an interval a new Surrey Chapel was built by the Primitives very near to the old site.

Here a very active Christian Mission has been carried on. The chapel being just on the border line between this district and the next, its place is perhaps rather amongst the remarkable Nonconformist efforts which we shall have to record in the next section ; but situated as it is, its action touches also the district with which we have been dealing. It is another instance of the attempt, exemplified by the Grove Mission, to arouse in the more religious-minded of the working classes a missionary zeal for the social and spiritual welfare of the poor and degraded. With these they are urged to share the gospel of their own salvation ; and for those whom sin or folly has dragged down, or who have been hardly treated by the world, good works are undertaken, not as of old to acquire merit, but in a spirit of simple devotion to the good of others.

In order to build up a Church of the people on these lines, the first object of the missionary has been to place himself in close contact with the family life of

those who are associated in the work. Contact is the watchword. The religious services are then made the centre of everything that is done. That held on Sunday morning is described as a teaching and expository meeting attended by 'Christian workers and Christians;' while in the evening there is a Gospel meeting to which many of these come again, and with them others of the 'unsaved.' As to these they say, 'We look for their regeneration—their conversion, before we have done with them.' To 'bridge the gulf' there is, in addition to a small P. S. A. for women, a Sunday afternoon Men's Brotherhood at which the attendance, though rather limited, is said to include some of the class aimed at. But the general fact to which I would call attention is that the hoped for conversion of the masses, whether realized or not, becomes the main religious exercise of a working-class congregation.

Numerous activities amongst themselves are, it is true, added to those undertaken for others; such as social evenings, concerts, lectures and various entertainments; and on this side the development is very similar to that which we have traced among the lower middle-class congregations of North London. Additional institutions projected include an 'educational side' and the mission follows the lead of the Wesleyan Missions in throwing itself into social questions and the social side of politics. Altogether it is a notable effort, worked on special lines of its own, but displaying great readiness to co-operate with other Christian bodies, and it is to be regretted that the man who built it up should have not remained to carry it on.

For funds it has drawn on its own congregation, but is also helped by the Primitive Methodist Connexion, to which not a few rich men now belong. There seems to be no friction with the Church of England. Indis-

criminate visiting is not undertaken, scope enough being found among those with whom the various branches of their work bring them into contact. The knowledge obtained in this way, they hold, helps them to avoid imposition; and if the charities they dispense as part of their social activity be not always wisely administered it is perhaps because they have not yet learnt how difficult it is to do good by gifts. In what they do there does not seem to be anything that can be characterized as religious bribery.

In Nelson Square, also on the borderland between this district and the next, and turning its attention in both directions, is the Women's University Settlement. It was the first Settlement formed for ladies and still fills a unique position. There are two classes of residents: those who undertake responsible work, and those who come as students in order to learn how to work. The latter come for one or two years and follow a prescribed course, including attendance at lectures, a certain amount of reading, and visits to schools, workhouses, &c., in addition to such practical work as they may be given to do by those in authority. In thus attempting to provide systematic training for workers who may be looking forward to honorary or paid positions, this Settlement stands first if not alone. Those who are given the title of 'Resident' are very carefully selected from applicants and, after a term of probation as temporary residents, their final election rests not with the other residents, but with the general committee of management, who in their turn are elected by the members—that is, by the financial subscribers—or are co-opted. The Settlement is thus a business affair with a very well-thought out constitution. The branches of work are no less carefully organized and systematically carried out, and their continuity so far as possible assured. The Settlement associates itself with district visiting and

with the management of collecting banks, for the promotion of thrift. As Board school managers, its members interest themselves in elementary education and pursue this in detail as regards invalids, cripples and the feeble-minded. They help with charity organization and the Children's Country Holiday Fund, and to all the social difficulties around them bring the sovereign touch and illuminating penetration of thoughtful women. Religion underlies all. Who can doubt it? But it remains at the bottom. No creed is avowed, no propaganda attempted.

In Nelson Square there is, too, an establishment of Clewer Sisters who, on the contrary, rely on declared religion of the most definite description as their guide and their banner. They, too, do parish work in the neighbourhood and maintain a home and school for girls, which widely different authorities (High Church and Primitive Methodist) pronounce to be excellent.

The work of Miss Octavia Hill, which we encounter in various parts of London and which must be treated later as a whole, culminates here in Red Cross Hall provided by her, in connection with their re-housing, for the recreation and elevation of the neighbouring people. In it, and in its charmingly fantastic garden, flower and picture shows are held and concerts given.

I may mention here also the work of Miss Cons, one of Miss Hill's earliest coadjutors, who carries on similar duties in rent collecting and the management of house property. Miss Cons undertook to transform the Victoria Music Hall into a reputable place of amusement. Her energy and perseverance have succeeded in this, and in adding to it what is in effect a minor polytechnic. It seems to be a law that successful philanthropic organizations which begin by seeking to amuse find themselves before long obliged also to instruct, whilst those which begin by seeking to

instruct end by having to amuse; and with both is it true that religion almost certainly comes in sooner or later. We shall refer to Morley College in another place, and also to the Borough Polytechnic, which is situated in our present district, but which draws its students from further afield.

## § 3

### FROM BLACKFRIARS ROAD TO LAMBETH

I will now ask the reader to return to the Thames and trace the curve of the river from Blackfriars Bridge to Lambeth Palace. The district involved is the western half of the segment of a circle which has the Elephant and Castle (or more correctly St. George's Circus) for its centre and the river for its boundary line. It differs in many particulars from the eastern half.

Its condition is greatly affected by propinquity to Fleet Street and the Strand, and West Central London generally; as well as to Westminster and the Public Offices. In the foreground is Stamford Street, still much frequented by a rather low, though not by many degrees the lowest, class of prostitutes, whose clients seek them here, but who, if ambitious, extend the field of their operations as far as Piccadilly Circus; further West lies York Road, conveniently central as a home of Music Hall artistes and also by no means free from houses of doubtful reputation; behind both lie numerous cab-yards round about which dwell the owners, drivers and stablemen; and sandwiched in amongst these are the dwellings of costermongers and street-sellers. Some of these last, after filling their barrows at Covent Garden or the Borough or Billingsgate Market, may tramp far afield to dispose of their stock, but the greater part are engaged in supplying

the daily wants of their neighbours and other South London folk who come to do their marketing in the New Cut. The rest of the inhabitants mostly look for their living to the money-spending powers of the North side.

Another noticeable influence is that of the great railway terminus at Waterloo, the presence of which is a stimulus to prostitution as well as to cab owning; while its extensions have aggravated the chronic difficulties of finding house-room in the closely packed streets.

On the low level by the river east of Waterloo Bridge, between Stamford Street and the wharves, there is a colony of dustmen. To this spot comes the refuse from the Strand district and the City of London, and those who do the work mostly live near. The Strand authorities send everything away as collected, and so keep a clean yard: but the City does the sifting here. The women employed used to be allowed the cinders as a perquisite and a trade sprang up in them, buyers being found at about 4*d* a bushel. This has now been stopped, to the regret of the locality. The women receive 12*s* a week wages. A special mission is at work among these people, but the missionary does not find them responsive. 'They respect me,' he says, but 'do not accept my message;' only in times of sickness is it welcome.

The work of the Church of England in this section is painstaking, but not very successful; lack of workers is felt. If some are introduced from outside it is by an effort that can hardly be sustained and their work is apt to become irregular and valueless. Thus, apart from the Sunday schools, it is on the clergy and on paid assistance that church organization practically depends. Even the most successful fail to attract more than sparse congregations in the morning; but without being crowded, they can nearly all make a fair

show in the evening. There is not much parochial or even congregational feeling. Those who come are mainly middle-class people drawn from an area somewhat wider than the whole of that which we are describing, who attend this church or that according to personal predilection. The number of active members as tested by communicants is everywhere small. The result is that much of the work of each church tends to be dissevered from its religious services. On the whole these churches are Evangelical, only two are distinctly High, but whether High or Low the measure of success attained hardly differs in degree or in kind. If the road has been missed it has been missed by both alike.

All have large Sunday schools and some of them have day schools also. All assert that the parents prefer that their children should have religious instruction. Thus amongst the children the Churches have ample opportunity ; but when they try to push this advantage in any direction they invariably fail. They administer charity, but dare not let their right hand know what the left hand is doing, lest the right hand show the folly of it. Their action in this direction is consequently half-hearted, and whether it veers to this side or to that the cause of religion profits nothing. They visit the homes and persuade the women to attend their mothers' meetings, but are able to exercise very little influence on their lives. Clubs for men and boys and girls are launched, but can only be maintained in a kind of galvanic existence. There is no up-springing life in any of these things.

On the other hand, there is no sensationalism ; no direct bribery ; no unhealthy stimulus or excitement. If the results be hard to trace, there is at least much evidence to show that such influence as is exercised by the Church in this unpromising quarter of London is wholesome and genuine.

The Nonconformists have been more successful, and in one case the success is most remarkable. At Christ Church, Westminster Bridge Road, is gathered a huge congregation, which has been combined for work as well as worship under Mr. Meyer's powerful leadership. Mr. Meyer himself is a Baptist, and facilities for total immersion were provided when he began his ministry, but the traditions of the Church, which claims to be a 'perpetuation' of Rowland Hill's work at Surrey Chapel, are Independent or Undenominational. The stately and beautiful church now used was built for Newman Hall, Mr. Meyer's great predecessor, but it is to Mr. Meyer that the present extraordinary activity and success are due, for, while 'he dropped nothing, he has added much to make Christ Church more than ever a big and successful centre of Christian and social work.'

The Church is famous, and has drawn its members from a large area, whilst among the congregation there have been always many visitors from America and elsewhere, attracted by the reputation of Mr. Meyer's preaching or by an acquaintance with his numerous religious writings.

But its inner circle is larger than the outer circle of any other Church in this neighbourhood, excepting only that of the Tabernacle, and its congregational activities are, I think, greater, and certainly more concentrated than those of the great Baptist Church, even rivalling those of Spurgeon's palmiest days. The Tabernacle is situated just beyond the boundaries of the district with which I am now dealing, and the picture I shall have to draw of it, and the great personality that still lives in all its undertakings, will form a companion, and the only companion, to the work of Mr. Meyer. These two great efforts may be contrasted as well as compared, and the contrast is nowhere more striking than in the architectural

features of the buildings in which they have centred. Spurgeon's great Tabernacle was destroyed by fire, but has been rebuilt upon similar lines of utility, for the single purpose of enabling the largest possible number to see the face of the preacher and hear his voice. Except as a great gathering of Christian souls, nothing solemn or sacred is aimed at. Beauty of form is entirely and deliberately neglected. So it is at all the great Baptist Tabernacles, in which the services are as simple as the structures are severely utilitarian. But Newman Hall's Church, with its ornate interior, its great organ, its liturgical service and its well-trained choir, is a great and successful attempt to adapt the aspiring and inspiriting beauty of Gothic architecture to the congregational ideal—and to the octagonal instead of the cruciform shape. The worshippers are still regarded mainly as an audience, but the house is manifestly a house of God. There is no platform to support the pulpit, and the pulpit, though sufficiently commanding, is not here the focus ; for that, there stands an altar table, albeit a very simple one.

All this speaks plainly of wide sympathies and open doors, but to live up to their building is found to be a difficulty, and there are those among Mr. Meyer's coadjutors who have sometimes sighed for a plainer structure, and felt that they were hampered by the liturgical service, which naturally, though perhaps not necessarily, goes with the ideas expressed architecturally.

The church has seating accommodation for over 2500 people. The galleries are free, the body of the building being occupied by seat-holders who assess themselves, paying from a sum in pence to a sum in pounds per seat. In the morning the church is two-thirds full; in the evening every seat is required. A great and successful effort has been made to interest some of the working-class population of the neighbour-

hood, and to create a feeling of *camaraderie* between rich and poor. The 'Pleasant Sunday Afternoon' meeting for men, which has been the chief basis of this attempt, has been aimed at non-churchgoers, and relies on all the usual machinery for attracting and holding them. An attendance register is elaborately kept. Badges are given, and absentees looked up. All are 'brothers.' Mr. Meyer has presided, but there are different speakers each Sunday. Except politics, no subject is forbidden, but the basis is religious, and it is said that a plain Gospel address is liked the best. The average attendance is stated at about eight hundred. It draws respectable working men from all around; if amongst them there be those of a rough class (as is claimed), they soon cease to be rough.

This meeting has been going on for six or seven years, and has become an association for thrift and other objects. The membership constitutes a book society, and the subscriptions of the members come back to them in the form of books; regularity of attendance being fostered thereby. The members all belong also to the P.S.A. Institute, which has rooms of its own, and, in addition, participates in the use of Hawkestone Hall. The young men of the regular congregation have clubs for cricket and foot-ball, tennis and swimming, chess and draughts, a 'Forum' for discussions, and a holiday camp in the Summer. The Brotherhood has a slate club and benefit society, a 'Help one another Society,' and a benevolent society. It has also a brass-band, and organizes a 'Pleasant Saturday Evening' entertainment.

The Sunday afternoon meeting is for men only (a limitation regarded as absolutely essential to success). A separate meeting has been organized for women, under the management of a missionary working in connection with the church. The men meet in the church itself, that being part of the plan which

aims at roping in the non-church-goer. The women meet elsewhere. Their numbers are very much smaller, and the proceedings more directly Evangelistic. There is also a glorified mothers' meeting under the name of the 'Women's at home,' with separate groups. The tables are set out with flowers and cage-birds; tea is served out at $\frac{1}{2}d$ each, and a lady hostess is in charge of each table. The babies, meanwhile, are cared for in an adjoining room. These meetings are given a religious tone. This, and such work as outdoor preaching, is carried on under the name of the 'Southwark and Lambeth Mission' by the special mission agent, but it is all inspired from Christ Church, together with much else that is concerned with religious and philanthropic or temperance work. So, too, the Sunday schools are separately organized as the 'Southwark Sunday School Society,' and extend to no less than nine schools meeting in the morning and afternoon, and six in the evening, wherein over five thousand children are taught, the teachers numbering about four hundred. This society, which dates from the time of Rowland Hill, has already celebrated its centenary. Mr. Meyer is president, as he has been of all the numerous subsidiary societies which serve the ends and employ the energies of Christ Church. A great deal is done for Church members, and especially for the young people, but much in return is demanded from them. One of the rules of membership reads as follows:—"It is expected that every member has a sitting and occupies it; is regular in attendance on Sunday; comes, if possible, to the Monday Evening Prayer Meeting; and *engages in some kind of Christian work*." We are told in the report that "the Church stands, first for Evangelical truth—the simple preaching of the Word of God—then for the blending of high and low beneath one roof;" "for interest in public life;" and for "all kinds of agencies

which will touch the various classes of the community." "It is absurd," continues the report, "for Churches to confine themselves to the services within their own walls. Perpetually the voice of Jesus may be heard saying, 'Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught.'"

These are the general lines that have been adopted, and on these lines a remarkable success has been achieved.

The Free Church Council for this district, of which Mr. Meyer is the president, has, it may be noted, succeeded not only in uniting all, or nearly all, the Nonconformist bodies for concerted action on social questions, but has been able to combine with some of the Established Churches as regards the suppression of vice and limitation of liquor licences. The friendly feeling thus engendered is signalized by 'fraternal' breakfast parties, which take place monthly, attended by four of the clergy and eight or ten ministers.

Baptists, Congregationalists and Wesleyans are all represented in this neighbourhood, and there is besides a young and vigorous medical mission sympathetically conducted on the ordinary lines. At Upton Baptist Chapel a strong congregation is maintained, in spite of the outward stream, by devotion to their pastor. It is a very genuine religious gathering of middle-class people; but its congregational life includes a large literary society, with cricket, cycling and other subsidiary clubs for young people. Connected with this church are two if not three local missions at which work is undertaken amongst the poor with not any more than the usual measure of success. The Congregationalists had a fine building in York Road, but it has been acquired by the Church of England to replace All Saints' Church, destroyed by the extension of the railway. Until recently, the Congregationalists were in very low water, and, though

a fresh start had been made, success was rather doubtful. The most interesting attempt made was the providing of dinner-hour concerts in the school-rooms from 1 to 2 o'clock for the benefit of working men. These seem to have been very much liked. The men, of whom about three hundred came from the surrounding works, were allowed to bring their meals and could sit and smoke. Addresses on social subjects were given by well-known people (fifteen minutes allowed) or a concert took place. The men all lived away, and thus only came under the influence of the church in a very slight way. But the example deserves to be followed.

The Wesleyans were formerly represented by a church in Lambeth Road with a 'carriage congregation,' but its people dwindled away, and a fresh start was made here under the name of 'The South-West London Wesleyan Mission; in order to seek and save that which is lost.' All the usual Wesleyan mission methods are adopted. An early report (1898) says: "The problem to be faced in the rescue of this historic church from failure and its reorganization as a mission centre was difficult indeed. . . . . It had become the despair of the Synod, yet it stands central for a vast population and ought to be one of the great soul-saving sanctuaries of South London." The first step was to shut up the church for renovation and to hold special Evangelistic services at the Canterbury Music Hall. These were very largely attended; but to fill the church has been found much more difficult. 'They have built the old waste places'—that is, they have renovated old chapels and have established mission halls in various parts; 'they have let down their nets,' by means of lantern services, women's 'At homes,' and a mission-stand for the sale of the Scriptures and pure literature in the street markets; by the 'liberal use of printers' ink they have made

it known that Lambeth Chapel is a centre of life and salvation,' and have sent forth their Sisters and their forty district visitors among the people 'to compel them to come in.' But they do not come very freely. The people, they say, 'have not yet realized the great awakening.' Encouragement, however, is found. They recognise 'the evident seal of God's blessing' and plead for more financial help, the work being hampered by lack of funds. If little is given it is confessedly because funds are short. The issue is plainly put forward. 'We must attend to the bodies first or what will be thought of our Christianity.' Great hopes were built on the influence of the Sisters, passing doubtless through the door of relief, and much reliance placed on the inculcation of temperance principles in the minds of the children. These are the early stages in mission hope and are likely to be disappointed, but the zeal and enthusiasm shown do always bear some fruit and have already done so in this case.

There is also a community of 'Bible Christians'—one of the eleven churches belonging to this sect in London. Most of those who attend were probably adherents of this community before they lived in London, and come to the church from long distances. Some supporters are also drawn from the neighbourhood by the mission-work, and the two elements are said to mix better than might be expected. This church, like those of the Wesleyans and Congregationalists, has been in low water, but has made fresh efforts and, as with the Wesleyans, has found it possible to bring together great crowds for special services, some with lantern illustrations held by them at the 'Vic' on Sunday evenings having been attended by about two thousand people.

None of these churches complain of lack of workers, and if to secure large attendances at times,

to bring some few into the fold and stimulate Christian effort in many, be success, success has been achieved; but, nevertheless, apart from Mr. Meyer's work, a feeling of doubt and discouragement prevails. It is only personal devotion to their pastor that prevents the Baptist church from falling into the slough out of which the others have been painfully struggling to emerge; and a hopeful spirit is maintained with some difficulty.

'Church work must be done on mission lines,' but 'the people take little interest,' says one. The attitude towards religion is that of downright indifference, says another, and the people are described as 'caring nothing about it; alienated by those who represent it, who have caricatured Christ.' Or, again, 'Missionary services must be followed by church organization, otherwise they are of little use.' 'The smear of drink is upon everything; the churches can do little till drinking is reduced.' Drunkards are constantly reclaimed 'and as constantly fall away again. The number permanently reclaimed is very small. The only hope is with the children.' So they work on in steadfast faith, but with hopes a little shattered.

The Unitarians have a substantial chapel in Stamford Street whence useful social work is done by ready workers. The religious influence is of the smallest and, indeed, very little is attempted. It is otherwise with 'The Working Men's Mission' which, with three or four branches in various parts of South London, is conducted by a family of converts who preach the Gospel in the light of their own salvation and obtain the workers they require from among those they have saved. This mission was started twenty-four years ago and after a long and arduous struggle was taken up financially by one of the pillars of Evangelical work in London. It has now an income of £1000, spent

partly in relief; not very judiciously it is said. The work is mainly amongst the children, but a brass-band and out-door preaching, combined with great simplicity and honesty of purpose, bring to their mission-rooms some Gospel-loving adults.

The devotion of working men when really converted to religion is everywhere noteworthy. Turning back to the Church of England, I read in my notes as to one parish that 'such help as the clergy and paid staff obtain is from poor working men: sweep, dust-man, and others. The earnestness of these men is remarkable.'

St. George's Cathedral represents the Church of Rome here. In spite of the formation of more than one mission-district out of the area formerly served by the Cathedral, it still remains the mission church for a Roman Catholic population of some seven thousand souls. In class they are varied, but practically all are living in tenement houses of one kind or another; a single family to a house is hardly ever found. They are scattered over a wide area. Upon many, especially the very poor, the struggling, and the out-of-work, the hold of the Church is slight, until sickness comes or death threatens. Then her ministrations are sought. The schools, the large convent, the home for working lads, and the St. George's Clubs for men and boys (worked principally from the small Roman Catholic Settlement called Newman House), and the large staff of workers, coupled with the fact that the Cathedral is the Episcopal centre of the Diocese of Southwark, make St. George's still a very considerable centre of Roman Catholic organization.

## § 4

### LAMBETH ROAD TO VAUXHALL

In the first segment dealt with—that which lies between London Bridge and Blackfriars—we have seen a region of poverty and low life where the most characteristic employment for men is the handling of cargoes discharged at Billingsgate, Bankside, or Fresh Wharf, and the distribution of fruit and vegetables from the Borough Market. The section lying west of Blackfriars Road has cab owning and cab driving for its most characteristic industry, and prostitution for its peculiar curse. Costermongering is shared between the two. Many, or perhaps most, of the men thus occupied live east of Blackfriars Road, but their trade centres in Lambeth New Cut and Lower Marsh. Moreover, the coster industry is a marked feature common to the whole of Central South London.

South of Lambeth Palace entirely different conditions of life and labour prevail. The potteries and the great gas works provide extremely good and regular employment for a certain number of men, and require also the services of a mass of less skilled, or quite unskilled, men who earn rather low wages ; or in the case of the gas workers are intermittently employed. Not only do a large proportion of the men who live in the neighbourhood find employment in the great works that have sprung up there, but many others are attracted from outside, while others again, having secured their work here, are able to move their homes to pleasanter surroundings.

The changes that have been brought about by the extension of these great businesses and the establishment of others, may be traced throughout South Lambeth. They involve a continual exodus of the more prosperous in both the middle and working classes. Old property finds new uses, and the colours

given to the streets for our revised map show the change that is taking place in the character of the population. The progress of industry—successful and very prosperous industry—has brought social decadence in this particular neighbourhood. Cheap tram-car and railway fares encourage the mechanic and artisan to go to Stockwell or Brixton, but the ordinary labourer cannot afford this. Thus the fairly comfortable have left or are leaving, but the poor or less well-off remain, and their numbers are increased and the character of the neighbourhood is still further lowered by incomers from clearances in Westminster or elsewhere on the north side of the river.

Dissatisfaction with the conditions under which they work has found expression in rather embittered strikes among some of these men, which, whatever the final settlement, have tended still further to drag the neighbourhood down.

It is among such shiftings of population and changes of condition that we have here to trace the work of the religious bodies.

The parish church of St. Mary, Lambeth, is very attractive. Its bells ring out, and morning and evening on Sunday the services are well attended as church attendance goes in this neighbourhood. Amongst the mass of the population we again hear that the only religious observance at all common is that of churching; that the great difficulty with which the clergy have to contend is 'the loss of the sense of the duty to worship;' that there is not the least opposition, and that the clergy are popular, but that 'this does not make the people religious.' These quotations from the account given us by the rector only repeat the story we have heard from every working-class district north of the Thames. And again it is pointed out that the moral tone of the

people in London who are church-goers is far higher than with the corresponding class in the country, and the astounding goodness of bad people is dwelt upon.

The population is touched by church organization at the usual points, but with something more than ordinary energy. The day schools are excellent, and by their very excellence discount the value of the Sunday schools, for which it is very difficult out of the neighbouring population to secure efficient teachers. District visiting fails from the same cause; but ladies have been found, coming, I think, from outside, who devote themselves successfully to the management of a very large club for girls and assist also in the control of one for lads. Into this semi-parochial work a great deal of life is thrown. Religious observances do not seem to be insisted upon, but though 'Youth may be at the prow and Pleasure at the helm,' and while games and dances fill the sails, the influence of the ladies on these girls and boys must surely be very good. The homes also are visited and thrift encouraged. There is, too, a 'Young Men's Friendly Society,' attracting a rather better class and leading up to a well-equipped men's club with about one hundred and fifty members. There is also a 'Church Brotherhood' (connected with which are slate clubs, &c.) counting four hundred to five hundred names on its register, and having a Sunday afternoon attendance of about two hundred. A good many of the Brotherhood are also members of the club, but the latter is run on entirely independent lines. Members of the Brotherhood are never selected on the committee, and it even appears to be a point of honour with the governing body of the club not to have anything to do with the church, which would seem to be far more tolerant of the club than the club is of it.

This Church is ready to and does co-operate with other religious bodies on such questions as social

morality, temperance and the relief of distress. For rescue work they have a home under Diocesan management, and special mission work in this cause is undertaken in Stamford Street. Altogether we have a delightful picture of useful social activity carried on under the ægis of the church and with the sound of its bells in the air.

While St. Mary's represents very well the 'parish church' influence, the Churches of St. Peter, St. Mary-the-less and Emmanuel supply excellent examples of High, moderately High, and Evangelical men, as well as methods.

The pastor of a Presbyterian Church, to be mentioned later, attributes the surrounding indifferentism to the 'formal' teaching of the Church of England, and especially of the High Church, which, he avers, has driven thinking people outside by 'preaching ordinances as a means of salvation' instead of 'Christ and Him crucified;' but in opposition to this view the vicar of St. Peter's is emphatic on the need of the most definite doctrines and observances and on the futility of even moderate High Church lines. At this church nothing in the teaching is 'watered down.' The doctrinal training begins with the schools, and it is hoped that the impress made may remain. It is an individualistic system. Every child who attends the day school learns thoroughly the doctrines which are regarded as of such vital importance; and the fact that no child is ever withdrawn from this teaching raises a hope (not I think likely to be realized) that through the children the parents also may be reached.

On Sunday those who attend the Sunday school are 'swept into church' for a celebration, and so brought to 'worship God in the only way they can understand.' Once a month there is 'a pomp with banners, &c.' Beyond this 'formalism,' very great stress is laid on the essential importance of confession. The work

employs four clergy and ten Sisters. Every effort is made to hold as well as to teach and great hopes are entertained for the future, but as regards adults and the present the success is very limited.

At the principal morning service, the Choral Mass, there may be perhaps one hundred women and fifty men. The numbers at evensong are rather greater. Those who come appear to be middle and lower-middle class people. The congregation is, however, said to be entirely parochial. The church has considerable architectural beauty, but lacks decoration, and there is nothing attractive in the music. Almost all who attend are communicants, and many, it is said, come to the early celebrations and not again. This small congregation of middle-class communicants is the result (July, 1899) of many years of devoted work by the present incumbent's predecessor.

The vicar of St. Mary-the-Less is an old man, who has been thirty-two years here, and is now Rural Dean. He has under his care a population of over twelve thousand persons. Of these very few attend the services at the parish church or in either of the mission churches. His account of the situation is very frank. 'As a rule nobody goes to church; it has always been a very small percentage. A connection can be worked up with comparative ease, but attendance at church is not the natural sequel—is not the natural thing.' This applies even to people from the country who may come to live in the parish (a thing which happens often as a result of railway work). 'A man may be a churchwarden in his own place, and yet in London never go to church; and conversely, if our people went to live in the country, many of them would be found going to church.' We hear, as usual, that it is not dislike, and it is not unbelief; it seems rather to be fashion. 'Mother,' said a boy of fifteen or sixteen, 'I'll clean for you, work for you, do almost anything for you,

but if you talk to me of going to church—I'll *enlist*.' The congregation as seen by us one Sunday morning was quite small (as the foregoing remarks would lead one to expect). In the evening, in addition to clergy and choir, about two hundred persons were present, mostly young, very earnest and attentive, and apparently genuine working class. It is a bare, wide, ugly church and the ritual is what is called moderately High. The little mission church of St. Anselm in this parish, which is attended principally by children, is a more attractive building. There are here, as in St. Peter's parish and in connection with the mother parish church, large day and Sunday schools.

Emmanuel is on a smaller scale and has no day schools, but has a large Sunday school, and, in its way, is hardly less active or less successful than the other two. The incumbent, who has been here twelve years, is a thorough Evangelical. He relies chiefly 'upon the plain delivery of the Gospel message,' and has supplemented the Church services by 'even simpler ones in the mission-room,' and during the Summer months open-air services have been held in the streets and courts of the parish. All the usual Evangelical agencies are actively conducted with the aid of two paid mission women. Religious tests are not pressed, but many of the most faithful Church members are stated to have been drawn in through the clubs. The numbers attending the services do not differ very greatly from those at the other two churches, and go much further in filling this small building. And, again, we hear that while the bulk of the people are indifferent those who come to church are extraordinarily warm and hearty.

Thus the story is almost the same whatever the ritual. This of course does not imply that the *same individuals* would be attracted, but it does seem that about an equal *proportion* of the population is influenced

in each case, and in about an equal degree. If this is a failure then they all fail, but if it is success they all alike succeed. The congregations are entirely parochial. There is nothing to attract outsiders. In each case the influence gained over the limited numbers touched is genuine and spiritual. Support has not been bought in any way, and fashion is dead against church going.

Mr. Meyer's church and the Wesleyan Mission, the work of which I have already described, are actually in the parish of St. Mary. They draw their congregations from all around, but the sphere of their work lies rather to the North, though one of the Wesleyan branch missions is here in Topaz Street.

There is also in one of these parishes a fair-sized Baptist chapel. Its congregation consists of lower middle and working-class people, and differs very little in actual numbers from those of the parish church. Thus the Baptists, too, have their *clientèle ;* and probably draw sympathizers from a larger area than that of any parish. They have established a mission hall in one of the poor streets, and at one time attempted, by open-air work and special meetings, to reach the people around, but the attempt has been abandoned.

The Presbyterians have a church in Kennington Road which has been turned into a mission, its main residential supporters having moved to Brixton and Clapham. In addition to the minister and a Sister, who are paid, there are about forty voluntary workers. The attendance at church is very small. Here they give 'the Gospel in its simplicity' and regard this as 'the only chance.' There are 'Happy Evenings for the People' during the Winter months, and connected therewith are the usual coal, boot and goose clubs, but the practice of giving a bonus has been abandoned, and even the members of their mothers' meeting

pay for their own excursion. Thus this, like that of St. Mary's, is an effort of religious people to organize local life. The general indifference to religion is admitted and accepted. 'Few go to church. We are practically dealing with home heathendom.' Some of those whom it is sought to reach have a notion that they don't need any religious teaching and are indignant at being visited. They are above it, and think that the visitors should go to 'East End slums.' Those who attend any church do so not as families, but as individuals, following their own fancy, and Sunday for the great majority is just a holiday: 'Beer and the newspaper are in demand;' and great parties go by brakes into the country for the day.

All this is familiar to us from what we have seen and heard of the condition of things in similar districts in the North-East. From the religious point of view there is clearly something lacking, which, if it is to be provided, will have to spring from among the people themselves. We are told that all the churches in this district must eventually become mission churches subsidized from outside, because the people of the neighbourhood cannot give the necessary support. But they quite certainly could if they cared sufficiently about them.

There is a very vigorously worked mission in Lambeth Walk, conducted by a London City missionary, aided by a large number of voluntary workers and a brass-band. The missionary visits some five hundred families, but open-air services are the main feature of the work. It is very difficult to estimate the results. In their own language, 'what the harvest will be, Eternity will alone reveal.' The effort has, however, been prolonged for twenty-four years and is still well maintained. The inspiriting sounds of the brass-band as its members march through the street, or settle down to their work at

some regular mission 'pitch'; the striking personality, earnest language and ready wit of the missionary, are constituents in the life of the neighbourhood not to be despised; though 'the splendid trophies of grace' which are claimed, may be few and far between. What is proved once more is that amongst this heathen population of ours, earnest Christian effort, of whatever kind, finds many adherents who are willing to sacrifice much for the cause.

The Moffat Institute is another example of praiseworthy effort; but this, though connected with the Brixton Independent Church, and started as a 'centre of Christian work among the poor of Lambeth' is not now so much a Mission as an Institute to provide healthy recreation for young people, in continuation of a very large Sunday school. The work has grown, and in its growth has moved from place to place and changed its character somewhat, but has always been able to secure a self-sacrificing band of devoted voluntary workers.

## § 5

### SIDE LIGHTS

As regards the three areas covered by the present chapter we have a rather unusual amount of information from schoolmasters and mistresses, nurses, and others not connected with religious work. The head of a nursing association speaks of the depressing influence due to the dead level of poverty in the three parishes where she works; of housing as the greatest difficulty, and of insufficient room as the cause of much sickness. Large families, high

rents, and consequent bad accommodation form the constituents of a serious problem. 'People only move when turned out and then stick to the neighbourhood if possible.' So, too, the hon. secretary of the Charity Organization Society in North Lambeth speaks of the run on accommodation as being very keen, and of the housing difficulty as frequently cropping up. The head of the Women's University Settlement spoke of the tendency to divide two-room into single-room tenements and of the occupation of some cellars in her district. Only very extreme cases of overcrowding were, she said, noticed by the Vestry.

The headmaster of the Lant Street Board school in St. Michael's parish (whose experience goes back a quarter of a century), speaks of overcrowding as the greatest cause of intellectual, moral and physical degeneracy, but adds that there is less of it. Not only is there now more official activity, but there is among the people a higher standard of comfort and decency which tends against one-room life for families. As an instance of a higher standard of life he notes that the families who go away for a week's holiday are increasing in number, and that the men care less than used to be the case about their annual beanfeasts. Speaking of the children, however, he says they are not easily receptive; not only have you to put knowledge into their heads, but to be at much pains to keep it there. There are those who are so mentally degenerate that they can never be capable of earning a living, but who yet can, and do, produce offspring like unto themselves. It is from the same district that the ladies of the Settlement notice the excessive proportion of the feeble-minded who come under their care. Thus the improvement noted leaves yet much to be desired. At an adjoining school—which, however, is not one of the poorest, but represents the average of Southwark—

the mistress also finds in home conditions a formidable obstacle. Half her work, she says, lies in counteracting other influences. She admits that in many, probably in half, of the cases the mothers seek to manage their homes well, and keep their children respectable and well behaved; but this is not enough to give character to the neighbourhood, and home mismanagement is a crying evil. She has seen cases of extreme poverty due to illness and lack of work, but is convinced that most of the existing misery is caused by ill-managed homes and drinking habits; and she, a woman, says that the women are worse than the men. As far as school is immediately concerned, she sees the result in unpunctuality, for these women will not get up to give their children breakfast. There is, too, amongst these people 'very little of the proud spirit which conceals its miseries.' Still, she, too, says that the conditions are improving, and that the pulling down of the worst buildings does tend to weed out the worst families. They do not cease to exist, and we shall by and by come across some of them in the Sultan Street area and elsewhere to the South. From a third school we hear that the children often come without breakfast; and in another case the social diagnosis of the master, referring to this neighbourhood, reads thus: 'Intermittent or casual employment; low wages; married women at work; squalid homes, dulness, disgust, drink.'

The master of a school in Waterloo Road, who has lately moved to a better district, is able to compare the two classes of children, and finds little difference in natural capacity. Those in Waterloo Road, who are a good deal above the Lant Street level, are frequently bright and seldom conspicuously lacking, and the difference noticeable is due mainly, he thinks, to conditions of life. Place the Waterloo Road children in still better homes, with adequate and proper

food, and make them keep regular hours, and they would be just as bright as those of Lavender Hill. But, meanwhile, his account is similar to that of the others. The schoolmaster's mission in such a district is to fight against the influences of home and street. Drink and overcrowding are the great evils. He attributes little result to the efforts of the religious bodies. But he, too, speaks of improvement in discipline, in orderliness in the school and in the manners of the boys.

Some of the children at each of these schools receive free meals, given by ticket, and provided mostly by one of the missions. The number of meals needed has been decreasing in recent years, and many of the children bring more bread and butter for their lunch than they can eat. Including free meals, very few are underfed, but the majority do not get properly prepared meals. Everywhere they suffer more from bad feeding than from underfeeding.

One school reports fifty per cent. of the boys as attending some Sunday school; another sixty-six per cent. These are, no doubt, rough estimates; the proportions for girls would be much larger.

The schoolmistress, while saying nothing for or against the work of the religious bodies, remarks upon the great number of movements on foot to benefit the people, especially the young ones: the Lord Mayor entertaining parties of Southwark children at the Mansion House; the annual festival at Red Cross Hall, with games and refreshments; free suppers given by Pearce and Plenty; Christmas-tree treats arranged; and flowers and boxes of clothes sent to the schools. The ladies of the Settlement help the teachers in collecting the savings of the children and encouraging them to save, and have appointed nurses to attend the schools, and see to little hurts and sores and minor ailments, so as to avoid either

their neglect, or resort to the hospital for trifles and consequent absence from school.

It is certainly the case that a great deal is done on all hands for the children.

## § 6

### LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

The new Southwark Borough Council has taken over the duties previously performed or neglected by the St. Saviour's Board of Works and the Vestries of St. George the Martyr and Newington; the area coming within their jurisdiction being the same as that of the St. Saviour's Poor Law Union, with a population in 1901 of two hundred thousand, an acreage of eleven hundred, and very high rateable value. At the time of our inquiry the old authorities still existed, and, being both attacked and defended, were greatly discussed and criticized. At St. George's, the main attack came from the Vestry's own medical officer. The controversy is ended. The vestry is dead; and their officer, in his new capacity of coroner, may preside over the autopsy. I do not, however, myself wish to press any such inquiry far. I would merely take advantage of the extent to which public attention was roused and directed to questions of local administration, especially as regards health, to cull a few of the remarks made by those whose evidence we were seeking mainly on other matters; and shall divide them between this chapter and the next according to the part of the whole district to which they seem more particularly to refer.

The members of St. George's Vestry were without doubt stirred to action, and though falling short of

their medical officer's demands, were certainly to be accounted progressive. They took action, as their report shows, in opposing private monopolies for electric lighting, &c.; they advocated the rating of ground values, protested against under-assessment in the City of London, and busied themselves with the details of the new scheme of local government by which they were superseded. They joined in conferences, and expressed views upon such questions as combined drainage, underground railways, supply of electric energy, regulation of traffic, methods of census-taking and municipal dwellings. They issued instructions to householders as to the treatment of phthisis and made representations to Government on the subject of tuberculosis. They recommended that the law as to occupation of underground rooms as bedrooms should be strengthened, and gave consideration to the whole question of overcrowding as it affected their district, though without coming to any practical conclusion. Failing in an attempt to effect its demolition some insanitary property was closed. Under their *régime*, improvements were instituted in the system of scavenging and dust collecting; the policy of laying asphalt in side streets was adopted; wood pavement has been employed to a considerable extent in main thoroughfares; underground conveniences have been constructed; and open spaces have been secured and laid out. Altogether it seems a very fair record, and public opinion generally recognised this. 'Efficient; doing its best,' says one. 'Efficient; very quick to reply to any complaints,' says another. 'Progressive; very much better than in the past,' says a third. But another note is struck by one who claims that 'they think of nothing but keeping down rates.'

The death-rate is high: 27·7 per 1000 as compared with 19·3 for all London (1899), the excess being

mainly among infants under one year with a rate of 205 as against 167 for London as a whole. The death-rate, says one witness, indicates mainly bad home conditions. Another is struck by the good health enjoyed in spite of these conditions, and considers it due to the out-door life led. A third tells us that health generally is good and epidemics rare. But the medical officer's report shows that the rate for zymotic diseases is 4·5 per 1000 in place of 2·5 for all London. Diarrhœa is the most deadly ailment, and measles comes next, both mainly affecting children. Sanitary conditions are stated to be somewhat better owing to greater energy on the part of the authorities, house to house inspection having been largely carried out, and increasingly so from year to year. This the medical officer considers as 'more important than any other single step.' 'There is much overcrowding, and it is useless to report any but extreme cases.' There are still many single-room tenements—ten persons, for instance, are reported in two rooms in Gun Street, and eight hundred persons in thirty-six houses in another street. But better inspection is improving things. The officials are more active and a higher standard of comfort is making itself felt among the people.

Of the St. Saviour's Board of Works it was said that ineffectiveness was not due to lack of conscience, but rather to lack of brains and energy, and it was complained that the permanent officials had acquired too much control. Another witness speaks of this body as doing its best. Overcrowding is again complained of and the extreme difficulty of dealing with it commented on. Herein is the Alpha and Omega of local administration in this neighbourhood.

The part of London dealt with in the present chapter extends to the South-West, beyond the limits of the new Borough of Southwark; and thus into the area

of the Lambeth Borough Council. But this Council has the care of a huge district reaching all the way to the southern boundary of London, and the remarks which follow concern only the portion of Lambeth lying north of the Oval and west of Kennington Road. In a general way it is said that the class of men elected to the late Vestry was inferior, but the sanitary officials are praised, and the work is stated to have been well done considering the difficulties to be contended with. 'The authorities are doing their best, but it is hopeless to expect them to enforce the law; they can only check the more flagrant abuses.'

Our evidence reflects the seriousness of the task: 'the housing difficulty often crops up;' 'overcrowding is on the increase and is a serious evil;' 'housing conditions leave much to be desired;' 'much of the housing is old and bad;' 'houses decently built originally, but becoming dilapidated;' 'some of the block-dwellings are the worst.'

Health, in spite of all, is fairly good; but the district lies low, conducing to chest disease; otherwise the diseases of the poor are mainly due to mal-nutrition and the condition of their homes.

The cleaning and lighting of back streets is alleged to be neglected, or at any rate it is thought that these duties might with advantage be better performed. Finally it is complained that the Vestry left it entirely to private action to suppress the brothels which disgrace the neighbourhood, but on this subject the difficulty of obtaining evidence is admitted.

On the whole the authorities come fairly well out of the fire of criticism.

St. Saviour's Union still gives a good deal of out-relief, though less than formerly, and no very definite policy has been adopted. What the Guardians do is condemned by some as 'inadequate; not wise;

too much and too little; leave widows to starve on a pittance;' and as being often scandalous because so inadequate. But, nevertheless, while less out-relief is distributed on the whole, there is a tendency to increase the amount given in each case and the humanity of the administration is praised. There are three distinct relief committees and every case is dealt with on its merits. There are no fixed rules and the probable result is a varying policy, which, by sometimes checking and sometimes encouraging the giving of relief, is open to conflicting criticism.

## CHAPTER II

## NEWINGTON AND WALWORTH

East of Kennington Road we approach the huge populous district of Newington and Walworth, of which Old Kent Road forms the eastern boundary. It is, as will be seen from the accompanying sketch map, bisected by the Walworth Road, and, following the common rule, is poorer to the east and north than to the south and west; but there is little to be said of any one part of this district that may not also be said of all the rest. It bears throughout a residential rather than an industrial character, and only at the extreme south-east corner, by the canal, are there any factories. The supply of their neighbours' daily wants occupies a considerable number of the people, and the great shops round the Elephant and Castle are the source of a good deal of employment, but the majority of the inhabitants find their work outside the district. Central position and accessibility explain the crowded conditions that prevail.

The outward drift of population, caused by the removal of those who can afford to leave the district, is felt here as much as in any other parts of London, and the continual flux of change and movement reported seems to be even greater than anywhere north of the Thames. It is an exceptionally shifting crowd. This aggravates the difficulties of the Churches, and it is not surprising if at times they despair of their task.

Formerly there was neglect, but this charge can no longer be justified. The efforts made to arouse the people to a sense of their religious and social needs, and to supply those needs, are certainly great, though the success attained may be rather small. In considering these efforts, I shall take first the work of the ordinary parish churches, and of the 'Mission districts' of the Church of England connected with sundry Colleges and Public Schools; then that of the Metropolitan Tabernacle and the Baptists generally; of the Wesleyan and other Methodist bodies; of the Congregationalists; and, lastly, that of some small independent Missions.

## § 1

### THE WORK OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

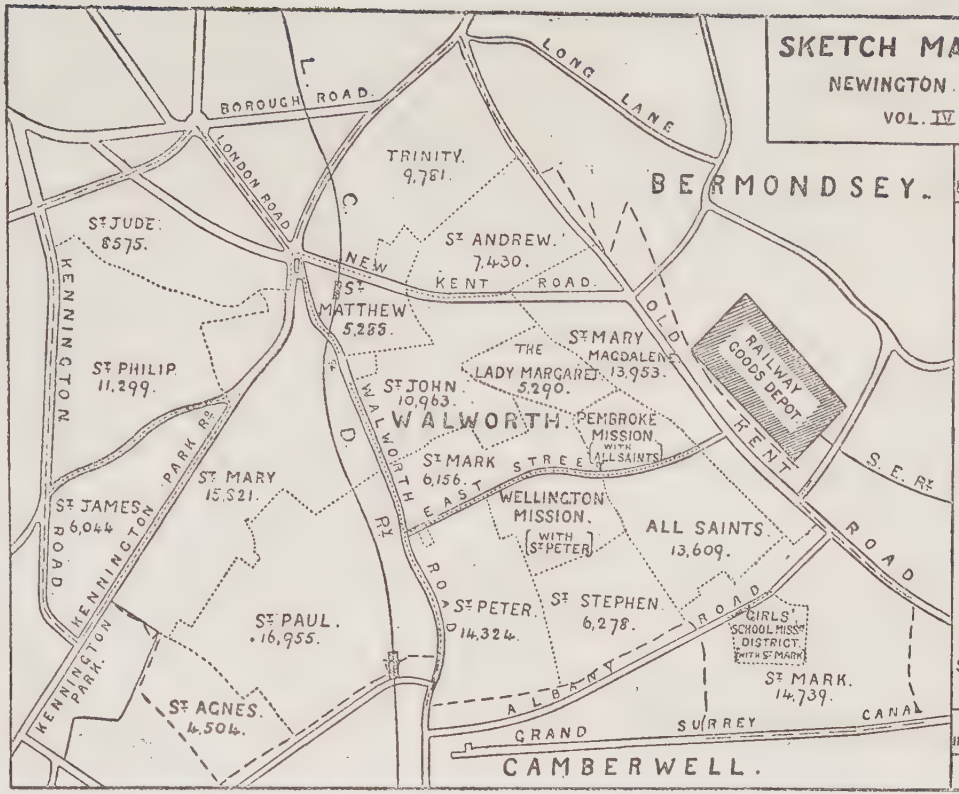
There is among the twenty parishes, or parish districts, shown on the map, a very great variety of aim, but an almost universal sense of disappointment. Nowhere in London has so strong a social and political flavour been imparted to Church work as here—rectors pose as Radicals, and curates become Borough Councillors—and this I regard as one symptom of religious desperation. Another symptom has been the establishment of the College Missions, which have flung themselves into the breach. Their efforts, being out of the ordinary way, have roused some bitterness of feeling and some recrimination, but these unwonted developments of Church methods have made also for breadth of view, and even brought about joint action where it might not have been expected.

I do not propose to speak of each parish in detail, but shall content myself with indicating the various

# SKETCH MAP OF DISTRICT.

NEWINGTON AND WALWORTH.

VOL. IV, CHAPTER II.




| POPULATION (1891) OF ECCLESIASTICAL PARISHES. | |
|---|---|
| LONDON ROAD. | |
| St JUDE | 8,017 |
| LAMBETH CH., 2nd St PHILIP | 9,815 |
| KENNINGTON 1st St JAMES | 6,373 |
| TRINITY, NEWINGTON | |
| TRINITY | 9,437 |
| St ANDREW | 7,343 |
| LADY MARGARET | 5,008 |
| St MARY, NEWINGTON | |
| St MARY | 13,322 |
| St MATTHEW | 5,305 |
| St JOHN | 8,977 |
| St PETER, WALWORTH | |
| St PAUL | 15,564 |
| St PETER | 14,035 |
| WELLINGTON MISS[n] | |
| St MARK | 6,142 |
| St STEPHEN | 6,776 |
| ALL SAINTS | 13,902 |
| PEMBROKE MISS[n] | |
| St AGNES | 4,372 |
| KENT ROAD | |
| St MARY MAGDA[n] | 12,532 |
| St GEORGE, CAMBERWELL. | |
| St MARK | 13,349 |
| GIRLS SCHOOL MISSION DISTRICT | |
| TOTAL - [1891] - 160,269. | |
| INCREASING TO [1901] - 171,009. | |

FOR OTHER STATISTICS SEE BACK OF MAP.

# STATISTICS *bearing on the* AREA INCLUDED IN SKETCH MAP NO. 14. *Described in Chapter II. (Vol. IV.).*

## CENSUS STATISTICS.

*Showing Increase or Decrease of Population.*

| Population in | | | | Increase per Cent. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1881. | 1891. | 1896. | 1901. | 1881-1891. | 1891-1901. |
| 150,549 | 158,892 | 165,134 | 165,980 | 5·5 % | 4·6 % |

| *Density of Population.* | |
|---|---|
| 1891. | 1901. |
| Persons per Acre. | |
| 186·7 | 193·7 |
| Inhabited Houses. | |
| 18,158 | 17,418 |
| Persons per House. | |
| 8·7 | 9·5 |
| Number of Acres. | |
| 851 | |

*Age and Sex in* 1891.

| Age. | Males. | Females. | Together. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Under 5 years | 10,343 | 10,552 | 20,895 |
| — 15 ,, | 16,956 | 17,382 | 34,338 |
| — 20 ,, | 7,669 | 7,342 | 15,011 |
| — 25 ,, | 7,703 | 7,435 | 15,138 |
| — 35 ,, | 13,510 | 13,186 | 26,696 |
| — 45 ,, | 9,800 | 9,769 | 19,569 |
| — 55 ,, | 6,822 | 7,090 | 13,912 |
| — 65 ,, | 3,720 | 4,151 | 7,871 |
| 65 and over | 2,120 | 3,342 | 5,462 |
| Totals ... | 78,643 | 80,249 | 158,892 |

NOTE.—The area of the Sketch Map includes the Registration sub-districts of St. Mary Newington, Trinity Newington, St. Peter Walworth (except All Souls' Parish), London Road (except St. Paul's Parish), and the ecclesiastical parishes of St. Mary Magdalene in Kent Road, St. Philip in Lambeth Church Second, St. James in Kennington First, and St. Mark and the Girls' School Mission district in St. George, Camberwell. Statistics being only available for the Registration sub-districts, the figures here given include those for the first-mentioned four districts and Kent Road, the parishes of St. Philip, St. James, St. Mark and the Mission district being omitted. For details of the Special Family Enumeration, see Appendix.

## SPECIAL ENUMERATION FOR THIS INQUIRY (1891).

*Sex, Birthplace and Industrial Status of Heads of Families.*

| Sex. | | Birthplace. | | Industrial Status. | | | Total Heads. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male. | Female. | In London. | Out of London. | Employers | Employees | Neither. | |
| 30,456<br>82 % | 6,591<br>18 % | 22,013<br>59 % | 15,034<br>41 % | 2,315<br>6 % | 27,452<br>74 % | 7,280<br>20 % | 37,047<br>100 % |

*Constitution of Families.*

| Heads. | Others Occupied. | Unoccupied. | Servants. | Total in Families. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 37,047<br>(1·0) | 33,499<br>(·90) | 81,789<br>(2·21) | 1,572<br>(·04) | 153,907<br>(4·15) |

Social Classification according to *Rooms Occupied* or *Servants Kept.*

| | Persons. | Per Cent. | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 or more persons to a room | 7,809 | 4·9 | Crowded 38·9 % |
| 3 & under 4 ,, ,, | 14,044 | 8·8 | |
| 2 & ,, 3 ,, ,, | 39,983 | 25·2 | |
| 1 & ,, 2 ,, ,, | 47,130 | 29·7 | Not Crowded 61·1 % |
| Less than 1 person to a room | 5,583 | 3·5 | |
| Occupying more than 4 rooms | 31,545 | 19·9 | |
| 4 or more persons to 1 servant | 4,037 | 2·5 | |
| Less than 4 persons to 1 servant & 4 to 7 persons to 2 servants | 1,849 | 1·2 | |
| All others with 2 or more servants | 355 | ·2 | |
| Servants in families | 1,572 | 1·0 | |
| Inmates of Institutions (including servants) | 4,985 | 3·1 | |
| Totals | 158,892 | 100 | |
| Living in Poverty (as estimated in 1889) | | 37·5 % | 100 % |
| ,, in Comfort ( ,, ,, ) | | 62·5 % | |

points of view taken, or methods of work adopted, beginning with the better-to-do and ending with the poorer parts of the district.

The rector of the mother parish in the pink part of the map, who has had charge there for many years, says that, after long observation, he has come to the conclusion that the 'old way of working a parish is the best way,' and that visiting and the exercise of quiet personal influence is the best work that can be done. This he successfully carries out; but still, from amongst a population of nearly fourteen thousand, there are only four hundred on the communicants' roll, and, taking church and chapel-of-ease together, the latter being very scantily attended, congregations of possibly three hundred in the morning and five hundred at night are all that can be claimed. There are regularly employed, besides the rector and four curates, four mission women, three Grey ladies, and one lay reader, together with some volunteer district visitors—a very great force.

The vicar of another large parish describes the people as mainly a high-skilled or low-salaried section of the community: 'artisans, waiters, printers, shop assistants, music-hall artists, and others,' and says that the best of them tend to move away towards Brixton and Clapham. The church is a large, bare, gothic building, chilly by daylight, but looking very well when lighted up at night. In the morning we found here about one hundred well-dressed people, and in the evening, including some children, there were possibly two hundred of quite lower middle class. The preacher gave them his best, and was attentively listened to. In the day schools fees are paid—2*d* for infants, and 3*d* for boys and girls; and this, we are told, sets the tone of the whole work of the church, the congregation, so far as it goes, being of the same class as the school children. Fee-paying children will not mix with those

of the free schools, either in the Sunday schools or anywhere else. This may be compared with the account given by the vicar of St. Peter's, Lambeth, whose schools contain many ragged children, with the result that some of his own communicants, 'while admitting their sin,' send their children to the Board school.

The vicar of another parish, who is a pronounced Tory, hating the Radicals and detesting trade unionism, admits that he is out of heart. He thinks South London a neglected part of the world, and his own particular spot the most neglected of all. 'Deadly dull; a sort of backwater of the metropolis, or the thickest part of a forest, to which people come to hide.' Shabby gentility silts towards it, but still the bulk of the population are working class. One cause of the dulness is to be found, he thinks, in the lack of public life, indicated by the absence of great public buildings. Life in London centres north of the Thames, and the thoughts of the charitable turn to the East End. In more ways than one South London is neglected. Dulness, in its turn, leads to vice. Nine-tenths of the prostitution, he thinks, is to be traced to idleness rather than to poverty, and prostitution is an open sore in his parish. He is himself Evangelical, but welcomes every centre of religious activity, High or Low. The difference of Church standpoint does not, he feels, make the least difference in the hold of the Church upon the people. The vast majority know nothing of the subject, and 'would not care twopence about it if they did know.'

The strength shown in these opinions comes out also in the work. Money has been raised, and a new church built of original and rather remarkable design. The congregations are not large, but the services are well given; and we are told that no less than eight hundred people, young and old, went for the annual

congregational outing. There are here day as well as Sunday schools; and all the regular machinery of Evangelical administration.

In another, a great parish with a population of about twenty thousand, where the incumbent is a good deal pre-occupied with social questions, scorn and dislike are expressed of numbers and crowds. 'Any one,' it is said, 'can get them. It is only necessary to be extreme in some form or other. What we need is to get behind the numbers and find out how they come to exist and to explain them. We have to ask what is the influence at work, of what kind and of what value is it?' He has numerous agencies in operation, but is inclined to apologise for rather than to boast of their number. 'We all do it,' he says. None the less does he regret the absorption of so much of the time of the clergy in 'running things,' and he describes the way in which he has to superintend entertainments, umpire at cricket matches, and so forth, thus using up time which ought to be given to spiritual work. The conclusion he comes to is that there must be greater co-operation on the part of the laity, if social work is to be done. Thus in the effort to dissipate dulness we fall foul of another stumbling block, and the problem remains unsolved.

In this case refuge is taken in the theory of intensive rather than extensive work, and the large proportion of communicants is rightly adduced as proof of success. Though limited as to adults, the work is almost unlimited as to children, of whom there are eighteen hundred on the Sunday school register. Besides the parish church, there are two mission churches, but those who attend the services at these churches do not differ in class from those to be found at the parent church; and so instead of acting as feeders and widening the sphere of influence the branch churches rather lead to separation.

This parish, which is run on moderately High Church lines, is well manned and has not lacked means. The vicar is still young and full of vigour.

Near by there is a church which attracts numbers by its extreme ritual. The congregation, which is very strong on the male side, has been the result of years of persistent work dating back to the days when ritualistic services were rare. Neither workers nor money seem to have been lacking, nor enthusiasm, and a success has been achieved ; but as most of its adherents are drawn from further South it can hardly be claimed that a solution of the religious needs of the district has been found on these lines.

Passing to the work of the Church in some of the poorer parts, the rector of one large parish does not take so 'despairing a view as many.' He is unwilling to estimate the influence of the Churches by the size of the congregations, though agreeing that they must be taken as indications. We are in touch with many who 'never go to church or chapel' and 'exercise some influence in keeping them straight' and (he adds) 'doubtless this is true of other bodies.' 'Many attend other neighbouring churches, for parochial lines are vague in London, and many are Dissenters.' The congregations at the church are indeed quite small, but they are five times as large as they were in 1888. At that time there was little or nothing doing : no mission women nor Grey lady at work ; nor any district visitors employed ; there was neither mission room nor club ; the church crypt—which now accommodates school children on Sunday, and is open every night of the week for other purposes—was unused, and he points out that this is no exceptional record of increased activity during the past decade. Stress is laid on the continual shifting of the people as aggravating the difficulties to be contended with.

'We are perpetually having to fill up gaps; we do not get a fair chance.'

In this parish the colouring of the map ranges from red to dark blue. Three distinct strata are discernible amongst the school children, and any proposal of an admixture from below is sure to be met with a protest, and the hope expressed that 'that rough class will not be allowed to come in;' the 'rough class' being in each case the class next below. These social feelings aggravate the difficulties of a parish church, and it would demand a very intense religious fervour to fuse them.

In another, rather similar, parish, where a large staff is working energetically on Low Church lines, the numerical results of fifteen years' work seem equally small; but here, too, the clergy claim to exercise a 'quiet personal influence,' which at least prevents moral deterioration. This church has a large and very aggressive temperance society. 'If they scent a drunkard they are always at him.' But as to the people at large it is not temperance, nor lantern lectures on current topics, nor anything of that sort in which interest is found. The 'little things they care about,' and about which information is provided by the cheap newspapers, are betting and sport of every kind.

The next church on my list is, I think, hardly less successful, though it makes fewer pretensions. The area of the parish is small, the population poor and crowded. A special effort has been made to reach the slum children, and systematic visiting is attempted, but found very difficult to compass. As to the congregation, the majority perhaps are not from the parish, though most are known. Here the music is evidently an attraction, but the competition of St. Saviour's has been felt. In this instance also we have the result of many years' work.

At one of the churches in the costermonger quarter the incumbent is a newcomer, fresh to London, and takes a rather gloomy view, finding people so poor and so rough. On Sunday morning 'crowds surge past;' the 'fancy' market of the neighbourhood being at his very door; the church remains empty. The people are exceedingly accessible and friendly and exceptionally easy to gather into any social function, but on the spiritual side almost hopeless. The instinct of worship seems lost. It might not be so with the women, but the weight of opinion is all against religious observance, and men will go so far as to forbid their wives to go to church: as one of them said, 'My 'usband don't 'old with that sort of thing.' Still, there is here, as elsewhere, 'a remnant, though a very small one,' and that remnant is very genuine and earnest. The number of communicants is comparatively large. The church is undermanned, and cannot undertake much visiting: 'We do not know more than one in ten, beyond perhaps a nodding acquaintance.' The social work is on the smallest scale, and there cannot be much of the nature of bribery. Those touched are the religious-minded, and for their suffrages the competition is keen. 'The element open to any influence is very small, and one agency must necessarily draw some away from the next.' Beyond this limited circle it is admitted that the influence of the Churches in such localities as this is based almost entirely on the hope or expectation of some temporal benefit.

It is in this neighbourhood that two of the incumbents, realizing the very limited possibilities of direct religious work in this population, have flung themselves heart and soul into the great task of local administration. In the Board of Guardians, the Borough Council and the School Board, they have found the arena in which to fight 'the battle of the weak against the

strong.' It is described as an effort to utilize existing forces, and to stir up enthusiasm so that people may use the machinery already at their disposal. These political methods are much criticized by those who are more inclined to trust to quiet personal influence for the spread of religion and the amelioration of life. Those who make use of them consider that the lack of religious sentiment is partly due to the feeling of the people that the Church touches a set of subjects different altogether from those in which they are themselves interested, and that consequently they are well able to get on without its aid. It is not, they say, that the people are ignorant of religion, but that religion is divorced from conduct. All this, it is hoped, may be changed by the Church stepping down on to the ground of the working man and moving more freely in the arena of every-day life. Meanwhile, it is admitted that the use of the Church services for marriage, churchings and baptisms, and the crowding in on the last night of the Old Year or for a harvest thanksgiving, are simply due to superstition. 'They do it to keep or change their luck.'

By those who hold these views immediate results are not looked for. They think it not to be expected that the working classes will be brought to church in any numbers while their surroundings are so depressing. Those who come now are the salt of the earth : quality, not quantity. The crowd may come later.

On the outer limits, eastward, of the district I am describing, there are two parishes, both of which after suffering greatly from social deterioration and neglect in the past have for the last four or five years been taken up energetically; the one on Low and the other on High Church lines. In the one case (the Evangelical) what forty years ago had been a fashionable church was almost in ruins. £5000 has been spent on

its repair and new life has been breathed into every part of the work. The response has been very considerable, and it is noteworthy that in this neighbourhood, also, we find the greatest local success of the Wesleyan body. No competition is complained of, however, or even admitted to exist, for that of the Nonconformists is held to be with other Nonconformists and not with the Church. The success of both Church of England and Wesleyans here is a proof of a genuine demand for vigorous Evangelical religious teaching, combined, it must be said, with very bright music. The claims made by the Church are very modest: 'we have nothing to boast of;' 'the great mass of the people are utterly indifferent.' But for a special 'war' service the church was crowded, and £7 was collected, chiefly in copper; and confidence is expressed that with more living (and more lively) agents the Church might do a great work.

The other, the High Church, has met with far less sympathy. The prevailing indifference is complained of. The people 'don't like to be bothered about religion: they think we worry too much about their souls.' 'It's all right if you just drift along, giving away blankets, and so on, but if you try to be definite you are sure to wake hostility.' The effort made followed, as already said, a period of neglect; there was no congregation, no Sunday school, nothing; the late vicar was an old man and tired of the work. The hostility seems to have been greatest at first. Charges of Romanism were freely made, and the Sisters were especially objected to. The feeling, though it has not completely died down, is decreasing; but from this change little comfort can be taken. 'At first, when our proceedings awakened curiosity, we made some movement, but the people seem incapable of any sustained interest.' And from a third parish near by, in which there is hardly any poverty, we hear simply

that a low material standard of life prevails and a certain measure of comfort satisfies. 'They do not want to trouble themselves about religion.'

Another parish, not far from here, provides a touching record of a failure. Some twenty-five years ago, part of a great memorial church was built by a wealthy lady for a parish, of which the population has increased and become poorer. The building has never been completed, and has the air of a neglected tomb. Yet here God is worshipped very faithfully with solemn choral celebrations; the service is beautifully given by the clergy and choir, but the congregation consisted, when I visited the church, of ten well-behaved children, one woman, and myself. The vicar, a good man, was specially chosen for the work, and pressed by his patroness to take charge of it, but the whole thing has been an error of judgment and a mistake from the first, not easy to retrieve: the mistake of beginning with the church instead of with the congregation. To have half a congregation and no church, is hopeful; to have half a church and no congregation, is in every sense the reverse. Nevertheless a defeat such as this may be preferable to many vulgar victories.

Part of this parish has been allotted to one of those great School Missions, which have been established to carry forward the work of the Church in Central South London. This mission has been set down in the poor and crowded part of the parish described by a neighbouring Baptist pastor as 'a barren wilderness where not four per cent regularly attend any place of worship.' It lies within a stone's throw of the empty church.*

The mission is called the United Girls' School Mission, and is still in the first flush of enthusiasm.

* Since this was written the incumbent of the parish has resigned and his place been filled by the head of the mission. (1902.)

The root idea is to interest the scholars, past and present, of large girls' schools in mission work, having regard especially to the spiritual and other needs of girls and young children, and a neighbourhood has been chosen in which poor children abound and where there is a marked opening for such work. The block in which the mission operates is covered with three-storeyed houses, packed very close upon the ground, all exactly alike. Each storey has three rooms, and in nearly every house live three or more families. The only open ground left in the midst of these houses, reserved perhaps for some such purpose, has been secured as a site for the mission church. Though not more than seventy-five by fifty feet in size, and a stony desolation, it is called by the children 'the field,' and by its use, so long as it remains unbuilt upon, the children are able to vary a little their usual street games. Money and helpers are not lacking here; the work has been begun with the people, and suitable buildings will in time be added. Meanwhile two of the houses are used for Sunday schools, and in the garden or back-yard of one of the Settlement houses near by, a mission hall has been built and is used for a temporary church. To reach this point has taken three years.

The success of this attempt was immediate, and no less marked than the lingering failure of the parish church. The difficulty of the church has been that no one is attracted by its services or affected by its teaching. Its costly unfinished buildings stand almost useless; whereas the difficulty of the mission lies, we are told, not in getting the people to come, but in finding room for them.

To explain this contrast we need to ask what, in truth, it is that Church and Mission have severally sought to do, and how they seek to do it, and we shall find that the method and the aim are hardly

less different than the results. A quotation from the first annual report of the missioner will help to make these differences clear. It reads :—

"When we sent out our first leaflet we said :

> "'We hope to set forth, by deed and word, a Christianity that is bright and social, that touches and includes men's bodies and minds; that concerns week days as much as Sundays, home and home life as well as church and church-going, work and play as well as "worship"; that looks upon everything as "religious," and nothing as merely "secular"; and that aims at making "the Kingdom of Heaven" begin here upon earth.'

"They are words which will, we trust, always represent the aims and work of the mission; for they voice the application of the Gospel—'the good news'—the Christianity—which is needed here."

Enthusiasm is infectious. The thing 'caught on.' "So many children came on Sunday morning that more had to be refused than could be crowded in. In the afternoon . . . . . two policemen were needed to regulate the crush, the children almost fighting to get in. . . . . On the second Sunday, though fifty chairs had been added to the previous sixty, and another room (a kitchen) opened, large numbers of children had still to be refused; and on the third Sunday, with our last room (a second kitchen) added to the previous ones, 'no' had still to be said to a few, though three hundred and five children were packed into the one house. By that time, too, the 'mothers' had gone up to forty-three, the sewing-class to about one hundred, the young women to forty-seven, and the men on Sunday afternoons from two to six." And the missioner, appealing to his girl supporters, exclaims, 'Was ever an opening like it?' . . . . . In carrying the work forward there has been no lack of funds. The schools for girls of the richer classes proved a gold mine. The last report shows that in the year something like £3000 was dealt with.

I have no wish to belittle this success, nor to lay too much stress on the losses suffered by the church in its Sunday schools by the competition of the mission. As the vicar himself said, 'It is doing good work, and that is the main thing.' But, in comparing this work with the complete failure of the church, and the comparative want of success of so many other churches, it is to be remembered that, as a religious effort, the place is mainly a children's church, and in the children and young people, among whom most of the work is done, lies, as is freely admitted, their hope. It is work of a kind which is comparatively easy to do, and which is being done wholesale in all parts of London.

It is one thing to organize a church for men and women, of which Sunday schools and social agencies shall be merely adjuncts; the task in a neighbourhood such as this is difficult, and failure much more common than success; it is quite another thing to establish a mission school, with social agencies attached, with the hope that from this may spring up a church for men and women. If the neighbourhood is well chosen, and the usual inducements are offered to the children, the schools will be crowded; while the social agencies will succeed almost exactly in the degree that they are not definitely religious. The money will be spent, but as to the church for men and women, it is doubtful whether much will come of it, except as a meeting place for the mission workers and a few poor women. Happy is it if the women do not come solely to qualify for participation in some of the good things that result from the expenditure that is the life-blood of all such mission churches.

There is another public school mission in this district, and two college missions, while others of both kinds are found just beyond our present boundaries, north, south, and east. 'Neglected South London'

has been their chosen field, and the movement has been authoritatively encouraged by granting them the spiritual care of portions of parishes, chosen for their poverty and need, as mission districts. To the work undertaken they have brought enthusiasm and high hopes, but only to meet disappointment. The admissions made are very frank. We hear that, 'Even of those who come to church, few do so merely from the desire to worship; there is a nucleus who come on principle, but with most it is rather a matter of personal loyalty.' The lack of adaptability in the English Church service is referred to, but without much force as regards people who, for the most part, are said to have no interests, but 'beer, sport, and how to pay their way.' We are told that, in the attempt to reach these people, 'social work bulks too large.' We read in one report that "diffusive work has been a complete failure," and that the necessary thing is "to close our ranks," the godly people coming out and recognising "that they are a Christian garrison among a heathen population." It is noticed that if a man becomes a communicant he leaves the men's club. In one case, the work is less that of a mission district and more that of a parish. The allotted area is larger, and contains all the classes usually found in South London. The church, too, is more of a church and less of a mission, and the music provided is good, with the result that there is a very fair evening congregation of women and young people; but on Sunday morning the numbers are quite small. The adult churchgoers are mostly parishioners and communicants, but they do not render personal service of any kind. For some years there has been no Sunday school, but it is to be reopened. About such work there is nothing exciting —nothing in it to rouse the efforts of a distant college, or to respond to them if they should be roused.

Some jealousy is naturally felt at the success of

the Wesleyan mission which is situated in the same neighbourhood, lying midway between these college missions, and we hear again that 'every hopeful case' becomes the battle-ground of the sects.

## § 2

### BAPTISTS

Though Spurgeon's great influence was not confined to South London, it centred there and has there left almost indelible traces. Whatever this master workman put his hand to seems to have been well and solidly accomplished, and to have been endowed with lasting life. Not only does an immense congregation gather round his son and successor, but the numerous independent organizations which he initiated and assisted during his lifetime, still retain their vigour.

It is no part of my present business to describe such undertakings as the Pastors' College or the Colportage Association which are concerned with the work of the Baptist Church generally; nor yet the Stockwell Orphanages or the Almshouses. All these things and many more took their rise from Spurgeon's teaching. Such was the power he exercised that, as one admirer phrases it, 'you could not hear him without saying, What can I do for Jesus?' It is in the number of affiliated missions that this influence is mainly seen. Managed by members of the Tabernacle; assisted from the Tabernacle with money and with workers; independent, yet readily acknowledging their allegiance—we have come across many of them. We are told that there are in various parts of London no less than twenty-one of these mission-halls, and that connected with them there are twenty-five Sunday

schools, with six hundred and seventy-six teachers and eight thousand nine hundred scholars. No collective account of this work is published, and I cannot myself vouch for the figures, but have no reason for questioning their accuracy. The Tabernacle has never published any Year Book or general account of the work centring there. 'It was not needed.' The relationship was personal between the pastor and his flock ; the influence spiritual. By Spurgeon the Gospel was regarded as a 'cure all,' and he dreaded and discouraged developments of what we call a social, but he, a worldly nature. There may now be some tendency to fall away from these traditions, but in their missionary work, as in their churches, the Baptists still give more exclusive prominence than others to the spiritual side.

In connection with the Tabernacle itself, there are Sunday schools with from twelve hundred to fourteen hundred children and some ten Sunday Bible-classes with about thirty in attendance at each. There are also three mothers' meetings with from one hundred and fifty to two hundred at each. A *crêche*, benefit club, temperance society, Band of Hope, and 'flower mission,' the last to distribute flowers in the workhouses and amongst the poor, appear to be concessions to new methods. Everything that is done at all is done on a rather large scale.

There is no attempt at systematic visitation, but there are about one hundred tract distributors. Relief is practically confined to a communion fund, of over £1000 a year, which is devoted, as is usual with these funds, to 'our own poor' ; a large portion is spent in pensions to aged members.

The burning down of the great building which had been the home of Spurgeon's voice has been a heavy blow. During the rebuilding of the upper portion of the Tabernacle, services were held in the basement,

which can accommodate two thousand persons. It was filled at night, and more than half-full in the morning. The upper portion, which has now been opened, is seated for three thousand. The membership, which in the old days reached five thousand, is now about four thousand, and, in spite of the fall, remains unique in London. It is still drawn from a wide area, but less so than formerly. The supreme attraction is wanting, and those who used to come from Hampstead and other distant parts of London are beginning to settle down in chapels nearer to their homes.

That the congregation should have held together as well as it has done is remarkable, but it is to be expected that the numbers will fall away as the older members die off, and to continue to raise the great income which this church has been accustomed to spend, may be found increasingly difficult. The congregation consists of middle class, chiefly lower middle-class people—for the most part comfortable, successful, godly folk. It is not to any considerable extent a working-class body. It is through the missions that they seek to do their duty by the poor, and amongst the workers at the various missions we find (more perhaps than anywhere else) religious-minded working men and women, though it is also said that there are some among them who *put on* religion; pious language being favourably regarded always, and being at times made use of by cadgers as a means of obtaining charitable relief.

In or very near the district I am now describing there are five of these missions, all stamped more or less with the same characteristics. Of one, the vicar of the parish spoke as 'The only agency with a hold on the quite poor.' 'They get,' he said, 'ragged children in crowds, and their Sunday mission service is filled by the women.' A small, but well-appointed mission hall is used. In this place the workers no longer come

exclusively from the Tabernacle, but belong to all sects. In another case the men who undertake the work actually belonged to a neighbouring Baptist church, but failing to obtain support from it, turned in their need to Spurgeon. Their work is mainly among children, but by open-air preaching they seek to touch those who won't come inside, but who (they venture to assert) go away carrying 'God's Word with them.' Now and then a convert is brought in. 'There is a working man to show you your seat, and a working man to give you a hymn-book, and nothing stiff or formal.' Connected with this mission there are seventy workers, all of them now members of the Tabernacle, and most of the necessary funds come from the same source.

A third and still more important work—that at Haddon Hall in Bermondsey New Road—ranks as a branch church, the members being counted as members of the Tabernacle. It has been in existence twenty-nine years, and, like much Baptist work, is in charge of a prosperous man of business; he, together with his brother and mother, being the leaders. There are three hundred and ten members, mostly of the working class, and they gather together quite a large Sunday evening congregation. The Sunday schools have about a thousand on the books, and there is a very large mothers' meeting at which the Gospel is preached. These women are of a lower class than the congregation, being described as 'the poorest of the poor.' Some of them probably attend other meetings. Out-door preaching is regarded as the mainstay; lantern services being no longer so effective as they were. Those who belong to the congregation, though working-class people, are of higher character and position than those whom they seek to reach, and are drawn from a wider area. The list of members includes the following trades:—painter, carpenter, stone-mason, bricklayer, tanner,

currier, leather-dyer, brush-maker, tin-worker, boot-maker, tailor, printer, drayman, carman, railway man, warehouseman, fish porter, dock and other labourers; besides clerks, insurance agents, and travellers. It is a mission church recruited from the more religious-minded of the people among whom its work lies, and as a rule the more religious-minded are also the better-to-do and socially the more respectable. On Sunday all are well dressed. After conversion, if not before, they are new clothed—'The outward sign of the inward change.' It is claimed that the prospects of the work have never been better, and the success is attributed to working-class membership combined with distinctly religious methods. It does not figure as a social agency, the view being held that its strength has lain in keeping clear of what is called the social movement.

The other missions are smaller, consisting of little more than Sunday schools, but, so far as they go, they show the same features.

The Baptist cause in Central South London is not by any means limited to the Tabernacle and its satellite missions. There are four other churches, two of which belong to the strict order of Baptists; all bear the stamp of genuine religion. Were it not overshadowed by the gigantic work of the Tabernacle, that of the old-established chapel in Walworth Road, which is within three minutes' walk of the Tabernacle itself, would appear more prominent. In spite of losses arising from the removal of their supporters to Beckenham, Brockley, &c., the church has five hundred members and an attendance on the first Sunday evening in the month (when the Lord's Supper is celebrated and all the 'outlanders' come) of as many as one thousand. On other Sundays the attendance drops to five hundred or seven hundred and depends much upon the weather.

The pastor, by whose personal influence the congregation is held together and who has occupied his position for eighteen years, takes rather a gloomy view of the future. He recognises that irregular religious habits are apt to be contracted when members live at a distance, and that it may be more desirable that they should become attached to churches nearer their homes. This he anticipates will gradually happen; leaving the old church to be run, subsidized, on mission lines, or closed for want of funds. Meanwhile, however, it must be said that a singularly effective combination of church and mission has resulted. A system of weekly collections provides the funds, the ship is well manned by volunteers, and many of the respectable working class are attracted to the services and to membership.

The poor and rough class of people in the neighbourhood of the chapel are not touched: 'they don't want us and they don't want our religion, unless they are in trouble, and then they run round to the minister for material, not spiritual help.' This class as usual is only touched through its children and the visitation of the Bible-women. The influence of these good women on the homes, and the systematic visits of the London City missionaries, are regarded as more important than that of the Sunday school. The unit of Christian labour, we are told, must be the family, not the individual. The children will do, not what 'the teacher' tells them, but what they see father and mother do. Schools, however, are by no means neglected, and deal with about fifteen hundred children on Sunday.

The social work of this church centres in the Victory Place Institute. It is freely recognised that the direct religious effect is small, but it is claimed, nevertheless, that the civilizing influence is great. 'Many men, who came there rough and uncivilized, are now walking

about London steady and respectable men, although they may never enter a church; just as you may often make a man a teetotaler without leading him to higher things.' And it is recognised that there is danger in the admixture of social and religious work, 'cheapening religion' and 'lowering instead of raising the spiritual taste.' Missions which appeal on the one hand to the pockets of the rich, and on the other to the stomachs of the poor, are very apt to be victimized by cadgers, who, the minister of this church recognises, 'are the greater frauds the more religion they profess.' Apart from such as these, the crowds attracted are to a great extent the 'weaker members from other chapels who want excitement.'

These are weighty opinions, and we hear from many that the struggle of competing sects is over the hopeful, not the difficult cases.

The Maze Pond congregation of Baptists is one that has already borne transplantation. It has a strong choral society and many visitors come to the evening services, which are widely advertised. It seems to rely very largely on attracting young people, and membership has not increased in proportion to the increase in attendance. Many who attend may be decided Christians and contribute to the funds, and yet not join the church; hesitating to accept the responsibilities of membership. But in this case, too, the measure of success, though having its limitations and ultimate risks, would be hailed with delight in any of the surrounding churches.

The Strict Baptists are not so strong in London as in the Provinces, but have a very important congregation at the Surrey Tabernacle; and perhaps no better proof of the inner fire that constitutes the strength of this body of Christians can be given than the fact that for fifteen years prior to the present pastor's

appointment the pulpit was vacant, no one satisfying the deacons during the whole of that time. Even when found, they waited four years for the man of their choice. They are a people greedy of sermons, which form the body and soul of the services. The pastor preaches three or four times a week, twice on Sundays and twice on week nights. The tabernacle, which is very large, is perhaps never more than half-full, but the congregation, coming from great distances, cannot all gather together every time. The corporate work of the church is entirely spiritual. 'No politics are allowed in the pulpit, but there are plenty in the pew.' If the members undertake educational or charitable work it is as individuals. If the church helps, it is unofficially, as in the case of a Sunday school which is carried on by members of the congregation in the Penrose Street Board school.

Altogether we have here a strong and active body of Christian worshippers, bound together by similarity of taste in religious matters as well as by unity of belief, and demanding nothing more. They seek no outside co-operation and attempt no general propaganda.

The other church of this sect is the little one in East Street, founded more than a century ago, and the parent or grandparent of most that we have described. The small congregation has declined in recent years, but is marked with the same earnest spirit that everywhere characterizes the Strict Baptists. It has a small Sunday school.

I have described the work of the Baptists here at some length, because it seems to me to be the most remarkable and successful religious development in South London. Much has been due to the personality of Spurgeon, but it is evident that there must be something in the locality and in the people suited to this form of Christianity and

Church government. It must also be said that this success, great as it is, and even if that of all the other Churches be added to it, leaves practically untouched the great mass of the population whether of the poor or the working class.

## § 3

### WESLEYAN AND OTHER METHODISTS

There is in this district one of the most active of the new Wesleyan Methodist mission churches. The minister of it is of the robuster type, impatient of old-fashioned ways and bold in experiments. He himself is one ; for he started life in the service of one of the great railways, and had good prospects there which he relinquished in order to prepare for the ministry. The experiment has answered. He has a sufficient gift of eloquence, and brings to the work that combination of business ability with simplicity, fervour and boldness, which I have already indicated as the secret of the success which has attended the recent missionary efforts of the Wesleyans. This particular mission, which has its centre in Long Lane, and is under the general direction of Mr. Hopkins, was joined by Mr. Meakin some ten years ago, and his special field of work has been till quite recently at Locksfields Chapel in Rodney Road. A fresh start is now being made, a large central hall and other buildings having been erected in the heart of the Bermondsey district to which we pass in our next chapter, and thither Mr. Meakin has recently moved. Meanwhile I may describe the work as it has been conducted in Rodney Road, where a new minister now takes charge.

Mr. Meakin made his first hit with illustrated lectures on topics of the day, making his own lantern slides and being thus very much 'up to date.' A graphic illustration of some event of the morning was often on the sheet the same evening. In such ways he obtained, and has been able to keep, the ear of the people; a brass-band to perambulate the streets and assist at the services, young men to buttonhole the stranger and invite him in, and Sisters of the People to visit the homes and dispense charity, largely in the shape of free meals, have been among the methods adopted, while 'Sunday Afternoons for the People,' of the usual popular pattern, have been held in the Town Hall, and meetings in winter at the public baths. It may, perhaps, savour too much of 'success at any price,' but as a result, or in connection with all this, there is every Sunday evening a congregation numbering about one thousand drawn largely from the working classes, and a strong circle of working members, bound together in the usual 'society classes,' who carry on the mission and teach in the Sunday schools. The evening congregation and the Sunday school are by far the largest in the neighbourhood.

It is claimed that this is a new piece of work, and that new people, previously non-churchgoers, have been gathered in. As to this it is difficult to say, but at least they come with a new heartiness and come largely from the classes which others find it so difficult to reach. Those attracted are not the poorest. It is admitted that the 'only hope for the slums is in the children,' so small is the proportion of adults who can be drawn from these poorer parts to religious services. And the signs of improvement noticeable in the most depraved districts are attributed not to religion, but to education.

It is very difficult to measure the value of this work from the religious point of view. It claims to be

wrought for the salvation of souls, but cannot, I think, be regarded as the great religious influence it desires to be. Attendances, always a crude test, are more than usually so when lantern slides and attractive orchestral music are freely used as auxiliaries. But even if the methods employed sometimes tend to lower the standard of religious taste, and whatever may be the class or condition of those who participate as hearers or as workers, the work of the mission undoubtedly does much to lighten and brighten and add wholesome interests to city life.

The other Wesleyan church in this district is of the ordinary type, with a most respectable congregation, mainly of the tradesman class. It suffers from the loss of members who move further out, but the numbers are still fairly maintained, and the morning congregation is as large as that in the evening, most of the members attending twice. There are eleven class meetings with two hundred and twenty members, a Wesley guild with one hundred and seventy members, and a choral society. In fact, all the usual and successful machinery of the sect is actively employed. Here, as at the Maze Pond Baptist church which is near by, the proportion of young people is large, and after the evening service a social meeting is held for the benefit of shop assistants or those who live in lodgings. Work among the poor who live close to the church, especially on the Albany Estate (the ground of the Girls' School Mission), is found to be very unsatisfactory by the Wesleyans as well as by the Baptists. The children who come to their Sunday schools are of rather a better class.

The Methodist New Connexion has four or five small chapels in or near this district, forming one circuit. The people at all of these are of the same character, being respectable working or lower middle class, and the children in the Sunday school are those

of members, or of others of quite similar position. The work is strictly congregational. The only aggressive development is open-air preaching in the summer months. But on the whole we shall find both Wesleyans and Methodists generally in greater force and more characteristically represented in the next district, that which lies between Great Dover Street or Old Kent Road, and the river.

## § 4

### CONGREGATIONALISTS

There are practically no longer any Congregationalists in this part of London. When we sum the matter up, we shall find that each religious method finds its place in London according to local conditions as to social status. The soil here was once favourable to the Congregationalists, but is so no longer. The Church of the Pilgrim Fathers, built about forty years ago, became quite empty, and for the past ten years, being largely subsidized by a rich Congregationalist, has turned to social work. This man having died the subsidy has ceased, and without it the work cannot be continued.

Time was when the York Street Congregational Chapel (now Browning Hall), had the richest and one of the largest congregations in South London, and the carriages on Sunday extended from the chapel to Walworth Road. One, who as a boy more than sixty years ago used to be taken to this chapel and who remembered the scene well, has told us how the Rev. George Clayton, the minister, used to drive down from Denmark Hill in a handsome carriage and pair. He was a man of very stately presence, said to be like

the Prince Regent, and at York Street was a little king. 'I can see him now,' said our informant, 'in his flowing gown, going up the pulpit stairs.' The congregation, drawn from Walworth, Camberwell, and Kennington, among whom Browning sat, was eminently respectable and well-to-do. There was hardly a poor person among them.

But that time is long past; and Browning Hall, as a religious organization, must be counted as an independent mission. In regarding, as it does, everything as religious which is not irreligious, it only follows the lines of all the great Congregational churches, but whereas with them we find a great social structure rising from a religious base, here the order is reversed. The social effort is the base, and so far nothing that can be called a church has risen from it. The attempt, however, is noteworthy, and by its very failure to create a church may indicate the neutral ground upon which religious bodies may, without jealousy, combine to forward the cause of social improvement.

The organization consists of a Settlement which in itself is pan-denominational, and which seeks to engage outsiders in the work. The activities are multifarious. They include all the usual efforts—Sunday schools and Bible-classes, Gospel services and mothers' meetings, Band of Hope and boys' brigade—only that the mothers' meeting goes by the name of 'Pleasant Tuesday Afternoon' and the Gospel service is known as the 'People's Evening' 'for praise, prayer and Evangelic speech,' and is accompanied with lime-light views or special music. Similarly we find the 'Fellowship of Followers' in place of a communion guild. They have the 'Pleasant Sunday Afternoon' form of service for men, and on Sunday morning an 'adult school' after the pattern of the Friends. Following in the steps of the Wesleyans, they have

a 'medical mission,' 'a poor man's lawyer,' a 'cripples' parlour' and a 'people's drawing-room;' while more distinctly Congregationalist lines may be traced in University extension lectures, ambulance classes, a Shakespeare reading circle, a French conversational class, and (for the winter session 1899-1900) a Paris Exhibition club. In addition to all this, Browning Hall is made a centre of social politics at which it is sought to avoid distinctions of party, as much as in religion distinctions of sect. The success attained is considerable, but somewhat spasmodic and strained. It seems to lack the full flow of Wesleyan enthusiasm and not to possess the solid character of Baptist work.

At the Murphy Memorial Hall, also Congregational, we find much less enterprise and activity, but a similar drift towards social and educational rather than directly religious methods; the road to Jesus being sought through the preaching of morality, decency, cleanliness, and temperance, rather than these things through the gate of salvation.

There is one exception to a general statement as regards the failure of the Congregationalists in this neighbourhood, but it is an exception which tends to prove the rule. It is found in the Sutherland Chapel, Walworth Road, where a genuine Congregational religious work is still carried on, under great difficulties, but with equal credit to the minister and his congregation; who, in spite of financial embarrassments due to death and removals, hold together, and by good business management and loyalty keep things going. There is here a very brave spirit, and the belief is expressed that the district has touched bottom. It is hoped that the advantages of city life will be appreciated more and more, so that the new dwellings to be erected may retain or bring back a class who will value such municipal provisions as baths,

free libraries and picture galleries, and know how to use the many conveniences of life which neither country nor suburban life can equally well supply. In this matter the supposed interests of a congregation such as this are indubitably those also of the community at large. Only by raising the standard of demand in city life can crowding be permanently and efficiently checked.

## § 5

### INDEPENDENT MISSIONS

The independent missions in the district I am now dealing with, and, indeed, in the whole of Central South London, are few and small. There is nothing anywhere on the south side comparable to the great spending institutions north of the Thames.

Mr. Fegan's Home for Boys and the missionary work which has been added, are a small affair compared to Dr. Barnardo's work at Stepney Causeway and Edinburgh Castle. Young's Working Men's Mission is nowhere when compared to Mr. Wheatley's St. Giles's Mission; and the King's Own Mission, Kennington, a very humble affair when contrasted with George Yard Mission in Whitechapel or King Edward's Mission in Spitalfields; whilst for the work of Mr. Atkinson in East London there is no parallel at all. It may be that it is this which has given rise to the idea that South London is neglected compared to other parts. But if so, it is, I should say, fortunate in this neglect. It is usually with the East End that the comparisons are made, but they apply, so far as charitable expenditure is concerned, to North and West Central London also. As regards religion,

I think the efforts made in the South are somewhat greater and better sustained than elsewhere.

The South London Missions, small though they are, seem to be honest efforts. Whether they would have swollen to the same size as the others, and whether have done more good or more harm, if it had fallen to them to open the floodgates of Christian benevolence, I will not venture to say. The work they do lies for the most part among the children who live near them.

## § 6

### MORE SIDE LIGHTS

I would beg my readers to glance for a moment at the coloured map of Inner South London at page 170. They will perceive that the part we are dealing with, indicated in the sketch map, page 5, is surrounded on three sides, east, north, and west, by districts poorer than itself, and to some extent this is so even on the south side. It is, nevertheless, crowded with inhabitants and is pressed upon by the overflowing populations on its inner borders, impelled outwards in the manner we have seen ; it has also its own natural increment to deal with, and throughout the whole area raising of rents and increase of crowding are the underlying evils, which aggravate all others: drink, dirt, disease and destitution.

On these points a few quotations may be given : 'The people are crushed by rent,' says one. 'In the blocks no one takes three rooms who can possibly squeeze into two.' But it is pointed out that neither the crowding nor the enormous rents which accompany density of population are to be accounted altogether

the landlords' fault; since, in consequence of the excessive demand, every room that can be spared is sublet, and so the house is farmed out and packed full. A Catholic priest says that some of his people occupy buildings 'quite unfit for habitation,' but balances this by adding that the 'rent is seldom paid.' 'Grasping landlords' are also referred to, who, when compelled to light common passages in the cause of decency and order, at once far more than covered the cost by increase of rent, only to be pursued, in their contest with the Vestry, by an increase of assessment; a seesaw with little advantage in it for the luckless occupier. 'Rents rising,' 'rents rising,' 'rents rising,' is reported on all hands; '6*d* or 1*s* a week added for new tenants,' 'three rooms can hardly be got for less than 9*s* 6*d*,' 'key-money, 20*s* or so, a very common practice,' and so on. As a natural result, crowding increases; 'many single-room people to be found where ten years ago there were none.'

Rebuilding is probable as the leases fall in. Meanwhile the best people leave, and the rest are constantly moving. The City missionaries 'continually encounter new faces.' 'Shifting, perpetually shifting; our lists are hopelessly out in two months,' says one of the clergy. 'The people are very migratory,' says another. The movements are reported to be due to a desire for better surroundings in some cases, to arrears of rent in others, and to local bickerings or a vague desire for change. It is a picture of restlessness and general discomfort, but undoubtedly in this respect the time of our inquiry was one of exceptional disturbance and agitation.

In almost every parish there are 'bad bits,' and in some extremely bad. In one case we hear of 'buildings where one may find people without chair or table—just a box or two for all uses;' but such signs of extreme poverty are rare and where there is actually great

poverty it is often accompanied by extravagant expenditure. The homes in the coster quarter near East Street afford the best example of this combination. It is a great Sunday morning market, but is not, as are most, an occasion for the sale of the poorest things to the poorest people, but one in which well-filled purses overflow in the purchase of the minor luxuries of life. Flowers smartly arranged for bouquet or buttonhole; fal-lals of ladies' dress and cheap jewellery for either sex; patent medicines or racing tips; tame rabbits or fancy birds are among the articles largely dealt in. The street becomes crowded with loungers; it is for them a 'church parade,' which takes the place of church, as church parades do sometimes elsewhere. Those who 'think it fine to walk up and down with a fowl under each arm' and perhaps a flower between their teeth, and who spend their money gaily, have probably pushed a barrow themselves all the week. The crowd which gathers thus in East Street is eminently characteristic of the neighbouring population, and the remarks which follow apply more or less to it. The people are described as 'kindly, genial and affable, and very goodnatured;' 'their really grave fault is laxity as to truth,' if any advantage is to be got by lying. These are the natural qualities, good and bad, of their calling. 'Drink is the most obvious, but lying the more serious vice.' As to religion, they have 'the supreme impartiality of ignorance.' At the same time, it was the wife of one of them who gave the reason already quoted for not attending the mothers' meeting, that 'My 'usband don't 'old with that sort of thing.' They have a rooted objection, we are told, to going to the Infirmary; those who do go come out again as soon as possible. A girl, dying of consumption, came out after a week, and said she could not do with the regular meals, she preferred to 'ave a bit when she fancied it.' Thus

the habits we stigmatize as shiftless, apathetic, ignorant, and lazy, are what they like. We are accustomed to call our habits 'second nature,' theirs are much more nearly nature itself. Sexual relations among the young are decidedly free, but it is unusual for a coster girl to have an illegitimate child. Marriage almost invariably precedes the birth, be it only by a month. The girl knows how to insist. Thus brought about, marriages are early. There is, however, no prostitution; nothing comparable to, or so bad as, 'that worst feature, the fast shop girl, who ekes out her income by semi-prostitution;' and the same authority, the Baptist minister, bears witness to the 'fine state of moral feeling found among the Christian poor.' Another authority puts it that the level of morality is not so low as might be expected, and that marriage, often early and sometimes forced, is, in a general way, and most frequently, the result of the young people 'not hitting it off' at home.

The superintendent of a mission, who has been among these people for twenty years, reports considerable improvement. They may, he says, be no less crowded, but are more civilized. The children who come to his Sunday school are cleaner and better dressed than formerly. Rags and bare feet, at one time common, are now almost unknown, though he thinks that the school still reaches the lowest class. This statement is confirmed by the mistress of the infants' department of the day school, called the Costers' School, who also has held that position for nearly twenty years. She notices a great improvement in both parents and children. But the picture given is still a dark one. The children, she says, are, as a rule, intensely dull mentally, and lack the power of concentration. They are naughty, cunning, and deceitful, and inveterate liars, a habit in which their parents encourage them. They are dirty, filthy, rough, and savage. Neverthe-

less, they are better than used to be the case, when many came swarming with vermin, which now happens but rarely. Boots are bad and underclothing is lacking, but outwardly they are decently dressed. There is amongst them, she says, a growing desire 'to be better;' they are more susceptible to moral teaching, and the habit of thieving has been almost eradicated in the school. The vicar in this neighbourhood spoke in the highest terms of the Board school teachers, but said that their work was like Penelope's web; the good done, all undone again by the home conditions: polite, soft-speaking, well-disciplined at school, loud and foul mouthed in the street, yet the same children. The Sunday school as an influence he found too irregular and too inefficient, and many do not attend it at all, something more than half, and less than two-thirds, being the usual estimate. Including frequent free meals for the poorest of them, most of the children are now adequately fed, but not judiciously. They gorge on Sunday, are ill on Monday, and live haphazard for the rest of the week on bread and butter, eaten in the street, fried fish and potatoes. Waste is the characteristic. The parents are a drinking, hard-living, thriftless set, and the few who are decent and cleanly are often among the poorest. What drink is to the adult, sweets are to the children; with both the amount expended in these ways is enormous compared to what is spent on anything else. 'Streets full of barrows; open front doors leading to backyard, where pony or donkey is kept; windows broken and grimy; children ill-dressed and dirty, but fat and happy; one or two women with black eyes,' tells the usual tale of coster streets.

Living alongside of the costers, and adding to the poverty of the neighbourhood, we find a low labouring class, largely Cockney Irish, some of whom are good Catholics and need no pressure to come to church,

while others have practically lapsed. The worst of them live in the Sultan Street area, which lies beyond the boundary of our present district. Few of these people are costermongers. They lack the grip of money needed for that trade, and even among some of the English the habit prevails of borrowing each week the capital required. 'They make a lot of money, but spend so freely that they have to borrow each week to buy their stock for Saturday: they borrow from more careful costers, not from outside lenders.' Such is the account our own notes give. So said our police informant.

## § 7

### LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

Newington Vestry, like that of St. George's and the St. Saviour's Board of Works, has been absorbed by the new Borough of Southwark, but the remarks made as to its action are of interest as indications of public opinion on questions of local administration, for it stood out as a progressive and vigorous body, and had to stand criticism for doing too much and for the spirit in which action was taken, just as others have for doing too little and for showing a spirit of neglect.

'The Vestry is progressive, enterprising and enlightened, and the administration pure,' said one of its most conscientious friends; but by another equally conscientious witness we are told that it is more and more difficult to get the right kind of men to stand, and that there was much corruption and log-rolling. Between these we have, as the opinion of another: 'Vestry run on political lines, but work not done badly;' and, more severely, 'very, very active, but all

its work vitiated by hideous party spirit.' It is also stated that 'they are apt to be extravagant, but do good work.' 'No complaint to make,' said another, and 'doing its best,' sums the matter up.

The details all point to activity. A large amount of sanitary work was evidently done. Very few houses were registered, but this was made up for by a great amount of inspection, whilst cases of infectious illness were attended to at once, and disinfection promptly carried out. The medical officer used to issue advice each year on some point connected with health ; in the year reported on it was a leaflet to parents on the feeding of infants, and the report itself contains advice to purchasers of perishable food—how to tell if it is unwholesome, &c., all very simple and practical.

Conditions as to health are said to vary greatly in different parts of the district, from 'district very unhealthy' to 'one of the healthiest spots in England.' The phrase 'fairly healthy' seems to strike the average. 'We fight hard for sanitation, and the health of the people is better than might be expected, but there is a general want of vigour ; the people are stunted,' said a member of the Vestry. 'Health good, but——' is the commonest phrase, and then follows a string of some of the worst ills that flesh is heir to : chest and throat diseases, much diphtheria, an undercurrent of scarlet fever, constant war with epidemics among poor children ; and finally we have the grim statistic, twenty-nine per cent. of the population die in hospital or infirmary. Overcrowding is held responsible for a great deal of the ill-health which exists, and much too is due to the habits of the people and to the ignorance of mothers as to the management of children.

The Vestry gave a good deal of attention to the housing question, but were not able to do anything efficacious. They engaged in an almost hopeless struggle against constantly increasing rents and glaring

cases of overcrowding. In many instances evictions cannot be enforced, because to do so would be simply to drive people into the streets with nowhere to go to.

The drains were formerly in very bad order, and have been largely reconstructed—'always up,' says one witness. Dust removal seems hardly adequate. 'Back streets are not properly looked after, and the water-carts do not come round often enough in Summer.' These streets are reported as strewn with refuse, 'vegetables, dead cats, dead chickens and putrid meat,' but the blame is put on the inhabitants, who throw everything into the roadway. We are, however, told again that the conditions are better than they used to be.

Public enterprise has been shown in the building of baths and wash-houses and free library, and in the installation of electric light.

# CHAPTER III

# BERMONDSEY

## § 1

### COMPARATIVE POVERTY

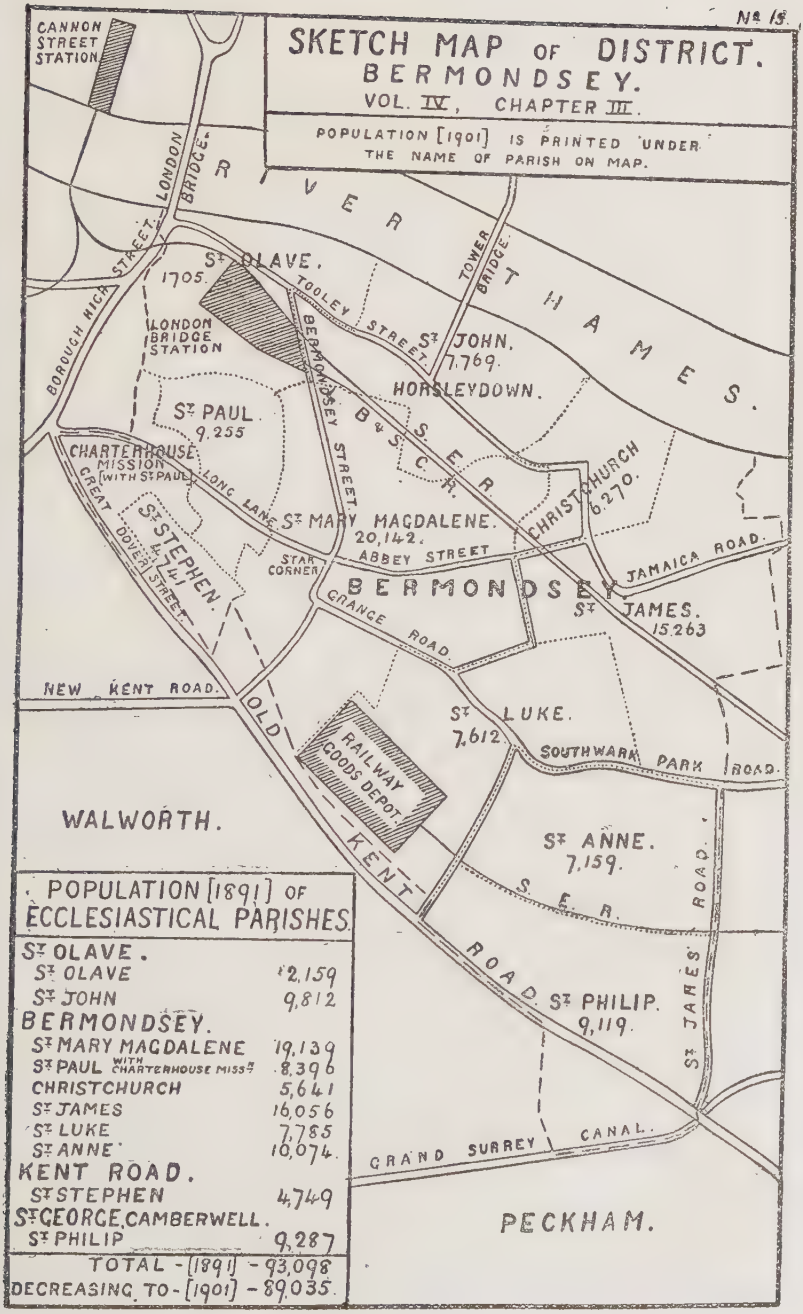
Concerning the poverty, degradation and irreligion of South London, a certain amount of controversy has arisen lately both as to the facts themselves and as to their seriousness when comparison is made with other parts of London. As is not uncommon, the very best informed people seem to differ very much, and in truth the ideas involved are rather complicated, and difficult to disentangle.

What is said for instance, and what may be true of a part of the district, is often assumed, either recklessly by the assertor or carelessly by the opponent, to be equally applicable to other parts or even to the whole district. The boundaries implied are very vague. Who can say what exactly may be meant by South London, or Southwark, or even Walworth or Bermondsey? Or if the reference be to a class, who can say what meaning may be attached to 'the poor' or the 'working man,' when some sweeping statement is made concerning habits or condition? Then if we succeed in eliminating these sources of misunderstanding, and know just what portion of the people or what districts are referred to,

other and very subtle possibilities of misconception may be found, according to the way in which the facts are regarded. A man is poor. Yes, but how if it is his own fault—perhaps it is because he drinks or will not work? The houses, it is said, are insanitary and disgraceful: but what can be done if old boots are thrust down closet traps? If little children die, it may be because mothers are ignorant or neglectful, or worse. Or, again, it is undeniable that many of the older children have got beyond control and run wild in the streets; but the schools are there; education is free: is it not the parents' fault if the children do not attend?

No doubt the facts remain; and in whatever way the responsibility be thrown, the main points at issue are the methods and possibilities of cure. Still, considerations of responsibility must not be neglected, for they underlie both the facts themselves and these possibilities. But it will be found that the views taken as to the degree of responsibility of the people for their own misfortunes and as to the principles on which philanthropic or public action should be based, react on every statement of fact. So there arise many discrepancies.

Most of the differences of view occur as to what the conditions actually are on the spot, but any comparison with those found elsewhere introduces further chances of misconception, and the case is terribly aggravated when what purport to be true recitals of facts, their comparative bearing and social significance, are used in impassioned appeals for means to carry out special methods of action connected with definite, but disputable, ideas as to the burthen of responsibility for the disorders described, and the possibility of their cure. Add a very moderate measure of exaggeration on the one side; set against it the very slightest tendency to minimise on the other; and without dishonesty, without any intentional deviation from the




## POPULATION [1891] OF ECCLESIASTICAL PARISHES.

| | |
|---|---|
| **St OLAVE.** | |
| St OLAVE | 12,159 |
| St JOHN | 9,812 |
| **BERMONDSEY.** | |
| St MARY MAGDALENE | 19,139 |
| St PAUL WITH CHARTERHOUSE MISS$^{N}$ | 8,396 |
| CHRISTCHURCH | 5,641 |
| St JAMES | 16,056 |
| St LUKE | 7,785 |
| St ANNE | 10,074 |
| **KENT ROAD.** | |
| St STEPHEN | 4,749 |
| **St GEORGE, CAMBERWELL.** | |
| St PHILIP | 9,287 |
| TOTAL - [1891] - | 93,098 |
| DECREASING TO - [1901] - | 89,035. |

# STATISTICS *bearing on the* AREA INCLUDED IN SKETCH MAP NO. 15. *Described in Chapter III. (Vol. IV.).*

## CENSUS STATISTICS.

*Showing Increase or Decrease of Population.*

| Population in | | | | Decrease per Cent. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1881. | 1891. | 1896. | 1901. | 1881-1891. | 1891-1901. |
| 98,608 | 97,405 | 97,206 | 92,300 | 1·2 % | 4·7 % |

| *Density of Population.* | |
|---|---|
| 1891. | 1901. |
| Persons per Acre. | |
| 129·5 | 123·6 |
| Inhabited Houses. | |
| 13,235 | 10,698 |
| Persons per House. | |
| 7·4 | 8·6 |
| Number of Acres. | |
| 752 | |

*Age and Sex in* 1891.

| Age. | Males. | Females. | Together. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Under 5 years | 6,756 | 6,698 | 13,454 |
| — 15 ,, | 11,351 | 11,036 | 22,447 |
| — 20 ,, | 5,004 | 4,582 | 9,586 |
| — 25 ,, | 4,618 | 4,494 | 9,112 |
| — 35 ,, | 7,701 | 7,430 | 15,131 |
| — 45 ,, | 5,726 | 5,597 | 11,323 |
| — 55 ,, | 4,108 | 4,227 | 8,335 |
| — 65 ,, | 2,259 | 2,554 | 4,813 |
| 65 and over | 1,315 | 1,889 | 3,204 |
| Totals ... | 48,838 | 48,567 | 97,405 |

NOTE.—The sketch map includes the Registration sub-districts of St. Olave and Bermondsey (except the parishes of St. Crispin and St. Augustine) as well as the parishes of St. Stephen in Kent Road and St. Philip in St. George, Camberwell. In these statistics the figures for the two latter parishes are omitted and the whole of Bermondsey included. The Census counts a block of model dwellings as a single house although many separately occupied tenements may be included. In St. Olave's this rule was not strictly observed in 1891 and some tenements were returned as houses. A special inquiry reduced the number of houses by 797 and would make the persons per house 7·8. For Special Family Enumeration see Appendix.

## SPECIAL ENUMERATION for this INQUIRY (1891).

*Sex, Birthplace and Industrial Status of Heads of Families.*

| Sex. | | Birthplace. | | Industrial Status. | | | Total Heads. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male. | Female. | In London. | Out of London. | Employers | Employees | Neither. | |
| 17,916<br>83 % | 3,649<br>17 % | 12,771<br>59 % | 8,794<br>41 % | 1,142<br>5 % | 17,118<br>80 % | 3,305<br>15 % | 21,565<br>100 % |

*Constitution of Families.*

| Heads. | Others Occupied. | Unoccupied. | Servants. | Total in Families. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 21,565<br>(1·0) | 20,904<br>(·97) | 51,997<br>(2·41) | 715<br>(·03) | 95,181<br>(4·41) |

Social Classification according to *Rooms Occupied* or *Servants Kept.*

| | Persons. | Per Cent. | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 or more persons to a room | 3,625 | 3·7 | Crowded 38·1 % |
| 3 & under 4 ,, ,, | 8,296 | 8·5 | |
| 2 & ,, 3 ,, ,, | 25,185 | 25·9 | |
| 1 & ,, 2 ,, ,, | 29,142 | 29·9 | Not Crowded 61·9 % |
| Less than 1 person to a room | 3,431 | 3·5 | |
| Occupying more than 4 rooms | 21,850 | 22·5 | |
| 4 or more persons to 1 servant | 2,048 | 2·1 | |
| Less than 4 persons to 1 servant & 4 to 7 persons to 2 servants | 696 | ·7 | |
| All others with 2 or more servants | 193 | ·2 | |
| Servants in families | 715 | ·7 | |
| Inmates of Institutions (including servants) | 2,224 | 2·3 | |
| Total | 97,405 | 100 | |
| Living in Poverty (as estimated in 1889) | | 41·4 % | 100 % |
| ,, in Comfort ( ,, ,, ) | | 58·6 % | |

truth; and without any allowance for ignorance or imagination, we have wide gulfs of possible divergence.

I cannot hope to close these gulfs, nor can I even expect to make the real underlying conflict of view any less, but I may be able to set forth the bare facts and show, more completely and more clearly than has been hitherto possible, how they differ in various parts of this district and how the conditions of life here compare with conditions elsewhere in London, and amongst these conditions I am able to include the efforts made to amend them.

Beginning at London Bridge and the Borough High Street we have already examined the condition of things from St. Saviour's to Lambeth and Kennington, and while disclosing throughout much low life and poverty, have seen how each district differs from the next in a gradual progression; indicated on the map by the change from dark and light blue, with patches of black, through purple to pink.

These regions (as far as Lambeth Palace) are all parts of old South London. The newer quarter lying behind the riverside fringe, differs even more widely from the rest and has also been described. Turning from London Bridge eastward we find again old-established poverty being gradually crushed out by the extension of railways and business premises, but it is a district which is not without many peculiarities of its own. It is shown on the sketch map herewith. Star Corner is its virtual centre, and is destined to become still more so when the street alterations now projected are completed.* On all sides of this centre—north, south, east and west of the parish Church of St. Mary—there lives a very poor population. I know no set of people in London who look quite so poor as those who do their marketing in

* The southern approach to the Tower Bridge has now been opened.

Bermondsey New Road on Sunday morning. I know no district of equal extent so depressing to the spirit as that which lies between Long Lane and Great Dover Street.

## § 2

### FOUR POOR PARISHES

In describing the work of the religious bodies amongst this population I shall take it parish by parish, and I begin at the centre with the mother parish Church of St. Mary Magdalene.

The rector is one of those who have been accused of painting things blacker than they are, and if offence there be he is in this respect a leading offender. His knowledge of the district is not of very long date ; and coming fresh to his work here and to London, he was very deeply affected by the poverty he found, and by the overcrowding, and the difficulty of combatting vested interests. He was shocked by the ignorance and apathy of landlords and employers as to the home conditions of their tenants or work-people ; and by what he regarded as the selfish sluggishness of local administration. He noted also the powerlessness of the paid officials, even if they were active, to deal effectively with admitted evils. He saw all these things and set lance in rest to amend them. He has been charged with exaggerating, and he certainly did not mince matters. He saw Bermondsey by day, and it was bad ; by night, and it was worse. The men went forth to work during the day and returned at night to drink the proceeds. Saturday had its orgy, Sunday brought no blessing. He took up everything breast high. He recognised, and used the words of St. Paul to proclaim, that "our wrestling is not against

flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness."

If he was forward to impress on others what he conceived to be their duty, he was also strong in taking up his own. The church is powerfully organized. There are five clergy, three scripture readers, three Bible women and a number of lady helpers and others, with a great staff of honorary workers, including eighty Sunday-school teachers. There is also a medical mission, separately managed, but claimed as a parish organization, consisting of a doctor, with a paid dispenser; and there is a nurse. Besides the parish church a mission church is used, and there are two mission rooms and club rooms, a clergy house, and lady workers' home. It is, in fact, an example of parish work of the most active kind, carried out on the largest scale.

The attendance at the services is hardly commensurate with the efforts made. It is to the mothers' meetings and Sunday schools that we must look, if the work is to stand any numerical test. We are warned, however, that the numbers are no measure of the influence the Church exerts, for 'the last thing the people think of is church-going' and in various ways 'the Church is throwing out her tentacles all the week.' There is indeed a good deal of parish work going on, the value of which is difficult to estimate. The system of visitation is elaborate; the district, large as it is, is completely mapped out; so much so that it can be said, 'we may not always succeed in entering, but the visiting gives some information about every house or shop in the parish.' The destitute and sick are helped by relief tickets and doles, hospital letters, and in various other minor ways. Every year some thousands of articles of clothing, old and new, are distributed, dinners and teas are provided, and excursions for poor

women and school children are arranged. The work of the medical mission is aimed chiefly at men and youths, and indeed has been limited to them. It has not been long established, and is at present on a small scale. But the organization has a life of its own. It connects itself with Oxford, and it is hoped that it may become an Evangelical University Settlement, and beyond its medical side, give men leaving the University and intending to take Orders the opportunity of a training in social work among the poor.

There is a men's club, but it has only twenty-five members. The only organization for men of any numerical strength is a loan club. But, on the other hand, one thousand children attend the Sunday schools and one thousand women are enrolled for the three mothers' meetings. In these departments, and in the visiting, we have the real work of the Church among the people ; and it is to the visiting and the charitable gifts, the treats and teas, the help in sickness and distress, that these large numbers are due. Large mothers' meetings are a tradition at this church. The work of the nurse lies entirely with women and mainly with these women. She is not a certificated nurse, and her principal business is to attend to maternity cases. As usual the women all come to be churched. In these and other ways it is claimed by the clergy that fully half the population are so far touched as to realize that 'we are among them as their servants and friends for Christ's sake, and that we are willing to help them in any way we can.'

This, too, is what all the missions claim. In this sense, by church, or chapel, or mission, the whole ground is indeed covered, but unfortunately there is in this, great though the conception be, nothing to which we can look with any confidence for the improvement of the character of the people or of the conditions under which they live ; if indeed the action

taken in pursuance of this ideal and the reliance of the poor upon it, do not rather tend to drag both character and conditions down to a lower level.

Of the adjacent parishes, the poorest is that of St. Stephen, which covers most of the large dark blue area lying between Long Lane and Great Dover Street. The vicar, a man of fifty or sixty, has held that position for fifteen years, and has known the parish for twice that period. He sees no change in it. 'It is no richer and no poorer; but,' he adds, 'poorer it could not be.' Basket-making and fish-curing are the special local industries. Almost without exception the inhabitants are casually employed, being largely costers of a poor type—many of them belonging to the class of small hawkers who carry their stock, being unable to afford either donkey or barrow. With the exception of a contingent of prostitutes in Etham Street, the people are thriftless, easy-going, irresponsible and intemperate, rather than vicious. Among them the work of the Church is 'terribly slow and discouraging,' so discouraging as to frighten away his workers. In one extreme case, a lady, after a few months' experience of the parish, burst into tears one morning, saying that she could bear it no longer: the condition of the people, their callousness, the sights in the houses and streets, had completely unnerved her, and she had to give up her task. 'They expect to see results,' said the vicar. 'There are results, often in the most unexpected ways and unexpected places, but they are few, and to expect them is a mistake. Here you must sow the seed and not expect to see the harvest.' The people are at too low a level for the average lady visitor and the work depends on the paid staff—two clergy, two mission-women and two nurses.

The numbers of those who attend the services of the church are very small. I have before me the

exact account, giving weekly averages of every service and every meeting held. So far as the attendance goes, it is strictly parochial. The ritual of the church is Low, but all is very carefully done, with excellent music, and the interior of the church is peculiarly and quaintly beautiful. Its situation, buried in a slum, robs it of all chance of outside support. 'To bring the church to the people' in this sense is, the vicar thinks, a mistake. It is better that the building should be placed in a good thoroughfare where people can go, unnoticed by their neighbours. 'Many,' he says, 'would like to attend, but are afraid to face the chaff.' It is not the religious services alone that meet with neglect. Everything that is done is done on a small scale; 'most things have been tried and failed.' The visiting, however, is very thorough, and the church-workers are received in the friendliest way. Little as it has to show for itself, who shall say this is a failure? But it is work that requires endless patience: 'Yes,' says the vicar, 'and love.'

With this may be compared or contrasted the work done or attempted by the Charterhouse Mission, which is one of the most strenuous of the school and college missions in London. The field of its work forms a parish nearly as poor as St. Stephen's, and this district, too, has remained practically without change during the fifteen years that the mission has been established. There have been some demolitions followed by increase of crowding, but the people are not actually any poorer. They, too, are described as 'mainly of the casual class, 'costers, brush and mat-makers, fish-curers, wood-choppers and labourers, with a sprinkling of prostitutes and thieves.' The mission began in the smallest way with a cellar church in Tabard Street, and in the remarkable buildings off Long Lane to which they have now moved, the same underground character is retained for the church, but so managed as to produce

a very striking architectural effect. This plan leaves room for clubs and other mission purposes above. The mission has been actively carried on, and neither money nor workers have lacked, though more of both are continually asked for. The religious basis is High Church, and this has tended to become more extreme both in ritual and doctrine. There are the usual services, celebrations, and processions, but there has been almost complete failure in bringing the men to church, and indeed a lack of response on their part to anything connected with the mission that savours in the least of religion. Churchgoers are regarded by them as 'mumpers,' that is, cadgers and beggars, and, by implication, hypocrites. On Sunday evening those who attend the service may number two hundred or three hundred, but are nearly all women; to the remaining services, except the workers, hardly anyone comes. In other directions must be sought any signs of response proportionate to the energy and devotion expended, but they will hardly be found. Many things have been tried and some have failed.

Besides the two clergy and the manager of the boys' club, and occasional old Carthusian visitors, there are two Sisters and some lady volunteers, who manage the girls' club. The parish is also able to furnish a fair number of teachers for the Sunday school, in which there are five hundred children. In the clubs the numbers are never large: for some years no religious test was exacted, but now, with both boys and girls, attendance at church and Bible-class is required, and this is found to work better. There is, of course, a mothers' meeting, but there is no temperance society; it was found to attract none but the sober, and has been dissolved. But the freshness of enthusiasm is not exhausted, and is reflected in the language of the appeals for assistance to the mission

in carrying on its work—its 'blessed work,' as they say—appeals addressed to Carthusians, old and new, whose alms and prayers and personal help are asked.

Brought down from imagination and hope to hard fact, there is nothing particularly successful, or exceptional, or unusual in the work of this mission. We find in it no solution of the problems before it; no new application of religious light to shine in the prevailing darkness. To awaken interest among the rich, to rouse enthusiasm and found a mission, to raise large sums of money and build a church, and then to live and work year after year with unflagging devotion among a degraded population, is undoubtedly success of a very marked kind in the conquest of difficulties; yet all this is only preliminary to the objects aimed at; and for effect on the mass of the population, nothing, at the end of all, seems to count except the 'patience and love' upon which the vicar of St. Stephen's rests his modest claim.

In St. Paul's, the last of the four parishes which I include in this section, the church is said to have been 'dead.' The recently appointed incumbent (1899) spoke of the work as being in a very depressed condition. The church was outwardly under repair, and appeared to be dull and dirty within; the attendance very small, but not much worse than elsewhere. Besides special children's services, which are said to be popular, there are social clubs, with weekly entertainments, for the young people of both sexes; and, as a further sign of life, very strenuous objections seem to be raised against Ritualistic innovations.

In all of these parishes the Church is recognised; but in none can it be called successful. In that respect the difference between them is not great, although considerable variety is exhibited in the attempts made. As regards religion their people remain practically untouched.

## § 3

### NONCONFORMISTS AND MISSIONS IN THE SAME AREA

The Wesleyan South London Mission took up the moribund cause of old Southwark Chapel in Long Lane, and has striven to stir it to new life. Work on the new plan has been going on for ten or twelve years, and, as with that in East London, it has been found necessary to provide several centres for it. Of these, that at Locksfields, under Mr. Meakin, already described, has been by far the most successful. Due partly to the more favourable situation, but still more to the personality of the acting minister, a large working-class congregation was gathered together, and the branch church has become a real centre of local religious life. But this cannot be said of John Street Mission Hall, or of Southwark Chapel itself.

Those who attend the chapel do not come to any extent from the immediate neighbourhood, being for the most part convinced Wesleyans from further South, attracted by the stir that has been made over this missionary enterprise, and the opportunities for work that it offers. They constitute a fairly large congregation, especially for the evening service, when some come who in the morning owe an allegiance elsewhere. The services are conducted on old-fashioned lines. At John Street there seems to be a complete failure to bring in to the 'Sunday Evenings for the People' the class aimed at, or, indeed, any class.

Since we began the present investigation, this mission has established a new centre, placing it at Star Corner itself, and has spent £30,000 on the buildings, raising the money by subscriptions from far and near. 'To appeal to the poor you must do things on a large scale,' is the theory put forward. To this commanding situation Mr. Meakin has been transferred, and here he is repeating the success of Locksfields. That huge

crowds are attracted is certain, and certain also that they consist very largely of the working classes.

This whole movement is regarded with great distrust by many of the most deeply religious people, and I can attempt no final judgment, especially here, where all is so new as to have happened after our inquiry on the spot was completed. We then regarded the work as one of hope rather than performance, but, except as regards remoter considerations, that can no longer be said. It is impossible as yet to see what the results are to be, or to measure the religious value of the work, but the first success is won. Every Sunday the building is filled.

The report issued from Long Lane, dealing with the whole work of the mission previous to the opening at Star Corner, states that during the winter "twenty-five thousand children had breakfasts," and it seems probable though it is not quite clear that individual children are meant, not merely the total of breakfasts supplied. It is said that, in order to 'spread the work,' a fresh batch of children was dealt with each month; a curious plan, which, if other missions do the same, perhaps provides an agreeable variety for the children. Moreover, such totals lend themselves to advertising, and the Wesleyan Missions, it must be said, are never behindhand in making the most of what they do in these and other ways. The report does not indicate, but it may be assumed, that the bulk of the free meals are distributed amongst the poor of the Long Lane and Bermondsey New Road districts, and not to any great extent in connection with Locksfields. With the establishment at Star Corner, hope and enthusiasm obtain a fresh lease. Not that, up to now, any failure or disappointment is admitted. On the contrary, the work of the mission would be described as one triumphant progress from victory to victory. Nor should I venture even to

suggest the applicability to it of such a word as failure if there were less pretension. The success attained, and, I think, likely to be attained, is certainly in some ways greater than that of others, but it is subject to other limitations, and the inflated ideas upon which it is borne along are full of danger.

The story of the South London Primitive Methodist Mission gives rise to a similar reflection. At the time of our inquiry Mr. Flanagan was already in enjoyment of his new Central Hall, but had found that those for whom it was built, 'the suffering poor of Southwark' —for whose sake, to obtain £10,000, he 'travelled thirty-five thousand miles, and preached and lectured over seven hundred times'—do not come to the new building any more than they did to the chapel in Trinity Street previously occupied. The disappointment must have been very great. Two or three years ago, in an appeal issued to subscribers, it was admitted that "if our work is to be judged by numbers, then we should be of all men most miserable." "But" (continued the appeal) "let the Connexion see us safely into our new premises, then, by the grace of God, we will endeavour to evolve something *seen*." After unwearying effort, the money has been all provided, but I fear that it may become necessary, in describing the new attempts, to use again the old language, and to say that what is done is done 'out of sight.' The buildings are in the highest degree successful; no more commodious hall is to be found in London; it is even beautiful, with a perfection quite its own; there is also a lecture-hall, and there are other rooms; and altogether, for mission premises, nothing could be handsomer or more complete. Nor is any popular attraction wanting: brass-band, string-band, a large organ and a trained choir, and last, but not least, a pulpit occupied by a very ardent and eloquent preacher. As I write these lines,

his beautiful voice still rings in my ears. It is indeed strange that so few care to listen; and, though perhaps not so strange, it is still more sad that those for whose social and spiritual needs all this has been done hardly respond at all.

The fact of failure is not and could not be admitted; moreover it is only as relative to the stupendous claims made that it is to be called failure. The congregation (gathered almost entirely from the better-to-do regions to the South) may compare well with others; and so, perhaps, may the ordinary missionary efforts of this church among the surrounding poor—the mothers' meetings, Sunday schools, and such like—but any such humble claim is lost in the grand but vague language used to describe the successes supposed to be achieved. 'Remarkable statement—wonderful testimony—glorious success;' and then these words follow: "And now unto the only wise God our Saviour, who hath done these things, be Glory and Majesty, Dominion and Power both now and ever. Amen." This appears on the outside of an appeal for money, and on the inner pages stress is laid on the wonderful way in which the pastor has been sustained 'among labours most abundant' in raising the larger part of the money needed to build the Sanctuary and schools required, which Mr. Flanagan pluckily refused to open till every penny was paid. The value of the work to be done for the people is assumed as self-evident, and the appeal concludes by asking "will you help us in 'this God-inspired and God-directed work?'" In answer to this appeal the help required was forthcoming and the 'impossible has been achieved.' The money comes mainly from his co-religionists, who are persuaded that a really wonderful work is being done amongst the people.

The place that the 'saving of souls' fills in the religious influences of London cannot be dealt with

now. It may be looked at as the only legitimate aim of the Churches, to which all else is subservient, and without which all else is failure; or, as the culmination and flower of a spiritual growth, every development of which is good as far as it goes; or, perhaps, as a mere incident, a by-product of religious excitement, or even as a symptom of occult mental disease. People equally devoted to the service of God, may, and do, honestly hold any one of these very divergent views. Those who take the first of these positions, and rely on the strength of its logic, must themselves test, and must be willing that others should test, their success by the salvation of souls, using these words in the sense which they attach to them. Judged in this way, the efforts of this South-East London mission fail, and so, measured in the same way, do the efforts of all who tread the same path, in their attempt to reach the masses and lift them out of the mire by the good tidings of salvation. What they actually do is to share with others the social work to which, as a beginning or as an end, all turn, bringing more or less devotion and more or less discretion to the task.

The social status of Mr. Flanagan's congregation falls a little below that of the Wesleyans in Chapel Place, but is, I think, above that of the congregation gathered at Locksfields. It is also above that of the Baptists at Haddon Hall, Bermondsey New Road, one of the missions already mentioned which have sprung from Spurgeon's Tabernacle, connected with which there are large schools and a considerable congregation, drawn mostly from the working classes. The Baptists preach uncompromisingly the doctrine of salvation and its reverse, and seek by continuous open-air preaching to evangelize the poor who live round about and crowd the street-market on Saturday night and Sunday. From this there is very little result as

regards the mass, but a more than usual amount of success is achieved in interesting in the work, as well as in the services and doctrines of the Church, a proportion of the more serious-minded among the working classes. It is a solid piece of work so far as it goes, and with extremely little pretence it goes further than most. In their works of charity, by means of which they seek to carry the Gospel to the very poor, they are said not to be wise—too ready to believe any canting tale. It may be so.

There is another body of Christian workers, and what is practically a humble church, at the Long Lane branch of the London City Mission. Here we find a Sunday school, a large mothers' meeting, and a good evening congregation. This work, like that of the Baptists, is an evident success. The religious feelings of the class to which they appeal are better satisfied by such services than by those of the Church of England, whether High or Low. Nevertheless, the missionary in charge here, and several other missionaries who work in the neighbourhood, speak sadly of the apathy they find. It is only a select few that are really won over, and the numbers are made up by women, about whom there is always a suspicion as to the motives which affect them. The work is specially for the young, and it is from the young that results are expected. With the adults it is forcibly said that it is 'like driving a nail into rotten wood.'

The district I here describe is thickly studded with missions, several of which I have not specified, but their work is not of any great importance. Sunday schools are attached to all the halls in which these missionaries conduct their services, and during the week the class rooms and buildings are largely used for the giving of free meals.

This form of charity goes on in the whole of this district to an extent hardly equalled anywhere else in

London. We have seen that the Wesleyans claim to have fed twenty-five thousand children during the Winter; spreading wide their favours. Almost all the missions join in this work. At 'Kent Street Sunday School,' with six hundred children on the books and an average attendance of four hundred, they give every Friday a free supper, to which about eight hundred children come, and throughout the Winter free dinners are given daily. At the Lansdowne Place Ragged School the published report, with accounts for 1898-9, speak of 12,818 free breakfasts, 2235 free dinners and 4772 halfpenny dinners having been given. At the girls' club 'a modest supper is supplied without charge,' and at the boys' club we hear that the halfpenny suppers are well patronized—'the excellent quality of the cocoa and bread and jam not being sacrificed to price.' The 'Poor Children's Society,' established by one of the missions in Tabard Street, is entirely devoted to this work, and so successful have been its appeals for funds that it now provides dinners for poor children in all parts of London. The hand-bill says that "Arrangements are being made for dinners to take place in various localities, but dates are not yet fixed. Those requiring tickets should communicate with Mr. * * * * *, who will forward same with date and place of meeting." The development of the work on this tide of prosperity has caused the mission to move to larger and much finer premises in Trinity Street, being those abandoned by Mr. Flanagan when he moved to his new hall. The appeal which has had such a success is headed:—"Another year's work among the drooping and the hungry little ones," and gives statistics which state that thirty-five thousand children have been provided with a free breakfast, dinner or tea.

We were present at a dinner given at a mission in the neighbourhood of Tabard Street. One batch of

children filled the long tables and, outside, a hundred more stood in line waiting their turn for the basin of thick soup and piece of bread, followed by a thick slice of plum pudding. The children were mostly ill-clad and neglected-looking, with ragged clothes and matted hair; there were among them some sore eyes and thin cheeks and arms; they were evidently hungry and eager for the food, but the majority did not look habitually ill-fed. The quite little ones, especially, were plump enough, and in their case even the clothes were well cared for. Parental pride, or motherly instinct, very often does not extend beyond the youngest children; the others are willingly abandoned to the care of any kind Christians who choose to step in.

The policy of feeding and taking charge of neglected children demands very serious attention, and is not to be condemned off-hand. I will only say now that witnesses who speak strongly against the system are to be found here among the very missionaries by whom, or with whose co-operation, the work has been done on such an enormous scale.

## § 4

### CONDITIONS OF LIFE IN THESE FOUR PARISHES

I do not think there is any room for doubt as to the mass of poverty and low life among which these churches, chapels, and missions are working, but before passing from this dismal district, I will bring together from my notes, observations bearing on the conditions of life prevailing in it, combining what I have seen with what I have been told. The police tell us that

'the streets between Long Lane and Tabard Street make an area that for notorious degradation, vice and poverty run hard the darkest streets to the west of the High Street.' Of Tabard Street it is concisely said, 'vice, poverty and business jostle here.' 'Its furnished rooms,' says another authority, 'are the scene of constant brawls and horrors.' 'The clergy are continually in the police courts on behalf of some parishioners.' Our own notes, referring to the courts between Delph and Staple Streets, where centres the fish-curing trade, describe the houses as miserable to a degree, but add that this may not be inconsistent with there being a good deal of money going. The arrival of an evening paper brought together a small crowd eager for news of the last race and the current odds. Gambling is almost universal. Pitch and toss begins with trouser buttons, and quiet spots are sought by those who break the law by pursuing the same game with pennies. The people we are told 'are extraordinarily wasteful, and seem to know nothing of the power of littles;' but in qualification of this the same authority adds, 'we have eight hundred members in our loan club, and last year paid back £2466 to depositors.' Another person speaks of the 'terrible extent to which the people (especially the costermongers) are in the grip of the money-lender, with his penny in the shilling per week interest, eating up nearly all the profit made.'

As to drink, what we hear is that there is 'no improvement among men and some increase among women.' There is trouble, it is said, 'in one house out of every two from this cause.' Again, we hear, 'the women drink as much as the men. They lie and sham to get the money.' Only as to violence and brutality do the police recognise some diminution, but much yet remains. Serious crime is rare; drink is the besetting weakness. Drunkenness, disorder-

liness, brawling and violent outbreaks under drink, are the commonest offences. This is true elsewhere, also, but is especially the case here. 'Fighting and rows have to be accepted.' Saturday night is of course the worst time. 'By day,' says one of the clergy, 'you may walk about and get an utterly false impression; the streets are clear and quiet, the people orderly and industrious, but at night they are hanging about the public-houses, or rolling drunk about the streets, or going about in hooligan gangs.' The number of public-houses is very great, but not, it seems, greater than the demand, for nearly all are put to it to serve their customers on Saturday night, and those who become intoxicated are really a very small proportion of those who drink. But the police agree that more people are seen under the influence of drink here than elsewhere, and the number of women frequenting the public-houses on Monday, and at other times too, is noticeable. Signs of excess, too, are clearly visible in the faces of the people. With this 'a gross virility prevails in some of the roughest parts of Bermondsey; the men big-boned and muscular, and the women to match.' This does not apply throughout. In the Tabard Street neighbourhood the people have a very poor physique. Everywhere they are civil if spoken to, but appear coarse and debased.

Owing to the increased activity of the authorities sanitary conditions have improved, but are still bad. 'Most have only one room,' says a missionary speaking of one poor quarter. 'The standard of cleanliness in the home is deplorable—old houses are overrun with bugs;' and our informant often had to close his Bible when they reached him! Demolitions have caused extra crowding in the streets and courts left standing. The new comers are burthened with large families, having for that reason been rejected elsewhere. They bring dirt and deterioration with them.

In addition to the 'most miserable courts, the district contains some of the worst specimens of "model" dwellings. One of the blocks in Portier Street has been closed,' and, it is added of those adjoining, 'they all deserve to be;' forming as they do 'a squalid centre of gross and miserable life.'

There are all classes of block dwellings in this district, including two great groups of Guinness' buildings which have replaced slums of the lowest character. As to the policy pursued by the trustees of these buildings, and such drawbacks as accompany the success achieved, it is enough at the moment to say that in them the poor can and do live wholesome lives. To wander through them is a great relief to anyone who previously has had to move about amid such streets as they have replaced.

Referring to the poverty of this as compared to other districts, we have the evidence of the head-master of Westcott Street Board school, in St. Stephen's parish, who was previously an undermaster at Lant Street, in the Borough, and before that at one of the poorest schools in Limehouse. He says that at neither of these was there such poverty as at Westcott Street, which he claims is the poorest school in all London. As such we ourselves considered it when studying the schools in 1890, and the appearance of the children to-day bears this out: poor, weedy-looking, collarless and ragged, with boots so bad that to go barefoot would be better.

The food of the poor too, here as elsewhere, is, even when sufficient, very irregularly supplied. There are few who prepare a dinner except on Sunday. They run out for fried fish or a bit of boiled bacon, and so on; and the children, unless they have free meals given them, subsist on bread and butter or bread and jam. The haunting faces one often sees in the streets show that many adults as well as

children, despite all the mission meals, do suffer from insufficient food.

There is undoubtedly much ill-health due to one or other of these causes—to drink or bad sanitation, to irregular, ill-chosen, or insufficient food; but considering everything, health is said to be amazingly good. This is attributed to the fact that the people live mainly in the open air. 'The women sit about on the doorsteps and the children live in the street, usually eating their meals there, such as they are.' Only at night is there a good deal of crowding. Both as to this, and as to housing and sanitation in this locality, I have more to say later on.

As to employment, it is said that since the great riverside strike and resettlement, work at the wharves has been more rather than less irregular and casual, whereas at the docks the changes that have occurred in this respect have been in the opposite direction. The district has also suffered from a partial removal to the provinces of the London leather trade. Connected with these changes in the occupations of men, we find a great extension of employment for women, mostly in the making and packing of jam. It is chiefly low-class work at low pay, and is largely seasonal in character. The relation of such factories as those of Messrs. Pink, Ord, Southwell, and Lipton to the neighbourhood in which they are situated is probably one of mutual reaction. They tend to perpetuate the low conditions of home life upon which their supply of cheap labour depends. In the case of Messrs. Clarke, Nickolls, and Coombs at Hackney, and that of Maconochie in the Isle of Dogs, we find a similar relation to the populations in their neighbourhood.

In no district perhaps can the prevailing industries be so readily detected by their smells as here. In one street strawberry jam is borne in on you in whiffs, hot and strong; in another, raw hides and tanning; in

another, glue; while in some streets the nose encounters an unhappy combination of all three.

I have already referred to the market in Bermondsey New Road. Everyone from this district goes there to buy, and some now from outside it. Anyone, with eyes to see, who walks amongst the crowd there on Saturday evening, Saturday night, Sunday morning, and till the butchers' stalls are quite cleared out, which happens about one o'clock that day, has little more to learn as to the manner of people who dwell in this district, and their habits of life. He sees them all, from the well-to-do down to the poorest, and one or two excursions into the back streets will complete the picture; but a few characteristic touches may here be added.

We hear of ingrained apathy and contentment, such as makes the despair of the missionary and the reformer, pervading life to the very end, and exemplified by the story of a dying man who admitted belief in the Bible and knew he was a sinner and that sinners unless repentant went to hell, but had no wish to repent, and died quite peacefully with that prospect before him. We are told of girls at the mission, one day hard at work for a Scripture examination, and on another day making cookery classes impossible by putting pepper in the sweets; and of lads who at holiday times go in full glory to the best seats at the 'Surrey,' with their pockets stuffed full of nuts, and talk freely enough of it, 'unless you are unwise enough to rate them about the wickedness of theatres and music-halls.' The apathetic content of the old and dying is thus balanced by abounding vitality and eagerness for pleasure in the young. Or again, hopeful latent instincts are indicated when we are told how the adherents of a mission, though quite of the poorest class, if they begin to come to church, change so greatly in costume 'that at times it is necessary to speak on the vanity of too much finery.'

I have written of this portion of London at considerable length because in it certain evils rise to their greatest height. It has not the Whitechapel Jew, the Hoxton burglar, or the Notting Dale tramp, nor is it, like parts of Fulham, a receptacle and dumping ground for the rejected from other quarters. It has not even the Spitalfields dosser in full force. It is neither vicious nor criminal in any marked degree; it is simply low; but for debased poverty aggravated by drink this portion of Southwark and Bermondsey falls below any other part of London. These, no doubt, are rather fine distinctions; but even as 'one star differeth from another star in glory,' so in like manner there are different degrees and kinds of black. A somewhat closer comparison may lie with the western half of Bethnal Green. The people there may be more brutal, but are certainly less poor; they hold a stronger industrial position. Some smaller areas may be found just as poor and degraded as this, as for instance that which lies north of the Pentonville Road, and there are others that we shall come to yet in South London, but the scale is so much smaller that the comparison fails, and in these respects this Bermondsey New Road neighbourhood retains its supremacy.

It differs in some ways from the almost equally large area in the Borough which we have just left, and in others from the district to which, as a continuation eastward of the river front, we shall pass next. Still, much of what has been said applies to these parts also. The character of the people changes and the conditions of life vary as we go West or East, but squalor, and even the pressure of poverty, are great throughout these adjacent districts. If, however, we take a wider range than this: if we include even only Lambeth or Walworth, what we have written has no general application; and if we

speak of South London as a whole then it is certainly true that it has been 'too much depreciated by the press and public opinion.'

## § 5

### THE RIVERSIDE

The parishes of St. Olave, St. John and Christ Church, Bermondsey, lying for the most part between railway and river, contain a declining population due to the demolition of dwelling houses for railway or warehouse extension. Some of the worst courts have been destroyed and their inhabitants have moved eastward. At St. Olave's, interest, like that of the City churches, is historical. The southern end of old London Bridge was at its doors. The parish once had a great population (during the plague it is said that sixteen hundred deaths were registered in one week), but there are now not more than two thousand inhabitants all told, and the number is diminishing as the last of the courts give way to business premises. The rector combines that position with the work of canon missioner of St. Saviour's, work which takes him all over South London to preach and hold special services. Of his parishioners, some three hundred and fifty—a migratory and entirely unapproachable element—live in a common lodging-house in Tooley Street, the six hundred connected with Guy's Hospital have their own church and chaplain, and the rest are mainly Roman Catholics. Excepting a parcel of charity school children no one comes to the parish church or requires its ministrations. The living thus, so far as the parish is concerned, is a sinecure. But there are various

endowment funds and charity trusts, and if the church is not to be demolished some re-adjustment of parish areas or parochial duties with St. Saviour's or St. John's will have to be arranged. Even then, though there might be parish work to do, it is doubtful if there would be any congregation.

At St. John's the ritual is High and the work of the church active and in some degree successful. When the High Church line was adopted some five years ago there was no one to drive away, and, as the result has proved, there were some to be attracted, though it be 'only a fringe.' But though some success has been won by very hard and thorough work, the mass of the people are still left quite untouched. The influence is personal, 'catching an individual now and then' out of a population that still numbers nearly ten thousand. The people are mostly very poor, and the congregation, though small, is drawn from this class. They seem to be very earnest and devout worshippers. There are large Sunday schools and two mothers' meetings, with clubs for young men and boys, young women and girls, guilds and Bible-classes. There is a mission church in Tooley Street in which lantern services are given and other devices adopted to entice the evasive parishioners. Christ Church (Bermondsey), with a similar population, has a large Sunday school and some of the usual parochial agencies. The latter are on a small scale and have little genuine life in them, but of the few who come to church most are communicants.

In St. John's parish there is a body of Congregationalists which had no chapel when our inquiry was made. The old one had been swept away by railway extensions and the new one near the Tower Bridge was not completed, and seemed hardly needed. The pastor and most of the congregation live away from the

district, but maintain a mission here which is in full operation. A band of forty members distributes tracts in fifteen hundred irresponsive homes and gives away clothes and sometimes money. There is a service for gutter children, who are given boots and clothes, and four hundred of them are entertained at tea in the Winter. Of such children there are plenty here, and of the homes and habits of some a picture is given in our notes on part of this parish. There is a little court, called a square, in the out of the way region of Shad Thames, where the river, shut off by high warehouses, is felt rather than seen. It was on a hot day in June. 'Out of the river, where they had been bathing, rushed a crowd of naked urchins. In the court, women, loud-voiced and foul-tongued, flung oaths at some dirty squalid children playing near. Another woman, strong and handsome, stupid with drink, sat outside her house, and from within could be heard the continuous miserable wailing of a child.'

In Christ Church parish there are two or three missions, but only one of them is at all remarkable. The hall in which its meetings are held is formed out of a very long, almost telescopic, railway arch, and is the centre of a very active organization, including a strong brass-band which is in great request to help other causes, on anniversaries or such like occasions. It has thus become almost a professional adjunct of mission work. On the evening when I was there the hall was filled with not less than two hundred and fifty people, mostly working class. Some few poor souls could be seen who might be cadgers, but the bulk, though many of them poor, were evidently ardent supporters of the mission, prepared to put their coin in the plate; and were on this occasion specially appealed to on behalf of the poor children in the Sunday school, of whom 'not more than one-

third,' it was said, could find money for the cost of the annual outing. This mission is connected with the L.C.M. organization, and the missioner, who has principal charge of it, is a rather remarkable personality. I do not doubt that he draws financial support from outside, but the breath of life in the movement, and its success, spring from his power of setting his adherents to work, and infecting them with the contagion of his own genuine love for the people. It is the same method as that of the Baptists' missions and the same Gospel, but I fancy the negative side of salvation is not very much insisted on.

The Baptists have an actively worked church in Abbey Street, their small congregation consisting largely of working men. They devote themselves to work among the poor on the riverside in Christ Church parish, and give an extraordinary picture of the poverty and discomfort obtaining in some of the buildings there. These have the worst possible character and are the last resort of the poor. Evictions are continual, and the piles of furniture in the street with the children crying beside them are a not infrequent sight. Many of the people are Irish Roman Catholics.

The Roman Catholic Church has three missions upon this river front : one, with decreasing numbers, but nevertheless a full congregation, near the north end of Weston Street ; another, with a very large church and increasing numbers, at Dockhead ; and a third, the parent establishment of which is far out of the way at the extreme verge of Trinity parish, Rotherhithe, but which, in order to be nearer to the people, has in recent years opened a church and schools in Paradise Street, Rotherhithe. All these churches are well-filled, and the difference between them and almost any of the Protestant churches in this respect is very marked. The work done by these, or any of the Roman Catholic churches in poor districts, is always very much

the same. The results vary a little with the neighbourhood or with the character of the flock, and to some extent with the personality of the priest ; but not enough to make it necessary to do more than record the comparative success of the Roman Catholic Church in bringing and keeping those over whom it has any claim under the influences of religion.

Its people are some of the poorest : the men and lads getting casual employment at the wharves or elsewhere, whilst the women and girls obtain work at the jam factories or in other similar trades, or are engaged in sack-making. Both the men and women drink heavily ; and as to food, all live pretty well, spending little on either their homes or their clothes. Many of the children go barefoot and ill-clad, yet look sturdy and well fed. These people account for a considerable part of the dark blue on this part of our map, but it is nevertheless their pennies that help to support the church.

## § 6

### THE REMAINDER OF THE DISTRICT

St. James's, St. Luke's, St. Anne's, and St. Philip's, complete the whole area with which we are now dealing, carrying us southward as far as the Old Kent Road. In these parishes we find ourselves in an altogether different social atmosphere. From St. James's a large proportion go to their work across London Bridge, the numbers who use Spa Road Station daily being enormous. The parish of St. Anne is described as the Belgravia of Bermondsey ; its people friendly, but inaccessible, proud and poor. St. Luke's is socially on the down grade, and the

vicar says the church is denuded of its best workers. The younger generation 'consider it as good as a patent of nobility to live at Brockley,' and move out. Those who come in their places are poorer, but mainly of the respectable working class. It is the same at St. Philip's : the middle class are leaving, but, with a little poverty here or there, the population left consists of the well-to-do working class.

The Church here is most effective at St. Luke's. In this parish, about one-third of which is occupied by the railway, the working classes come to the services in considerable numbers, and the comparative success seems to have been the result of systematic visitation and of setting the people themselves to work. Discarding lady visitors from outside, 'who could not keep their hands from their pockets,' the vicar turned to his own parishioners, and they, while carrying round the Parish Magazine, instead of giving, collect. There is much friendly feeling. 'The people are ready to do anything they can for you—short of coming to church,' but still this church is much better filled than most, and with a genuine parochial congregation of artisan class. There is in the parish one very poor patch which, reinforced by outcasts from elsewhere, has gone from bad to worse in the last ten years. Apart from the children, the efforts made at the parish mission hall to reach the people by services, specially directed towards them, have entirely failed, no permanent results being produced. The vicar is out of conceit with these methods ; and 'open-air services,' he says, 'have been overdone.'

In the other three parishes that we have named very few of the working class can be attracted to church. St. James's is a huge, uninviting building and looks deplorably empty with the one hundred that attend in the morning, or the two hundred who may be counted there at night, and these are mostly lower

middle-class people. At St. Anne's and St. Philip's the numbers are smaller still. All have the usual minor organizations. There is nothing remarkable done.

The vicar of St. James's occupies a house in Jamaica Road and, however it may have come about, Christ Church has for its use the vicarage house that stands by St. James's Church. The two parishes lie side by side, as that of St. James, whilst going much further South, extends to the river front by Bermondsey Wall. In that part it has a considerable population which is poor, though not so poor as are portions of Christ Church on the one hand, and St. Crispin on the other: while to the South the poor courts off Spa Road belong to St. Luke's, so on the whole the people of this large parish are of higher social grade than their neighbours. But the vicar sees church work under various aspects, and he is one who in his desire to estimate it fairly is capable of looking at the question of Church influence in many and even 'at times in quite opposite lights.'

The organization includes day and Sunday schools in each department, the Sunday school being spread over the parish by means of separate mission halls, where also services are held on Sunday evening. There are more children in the Sunday schools than in the day schools, but it does not follow that the day school children attend the Church Sunday schools. They may like a change or prefer the Nonconformist schools on Sunday. The Board school children are similarly shared. Of adults comparatively few go to any place of worship. A census taken at first and since maintained to some extent in the visiting books, puts the letters O. C. opposite a good many names, meaning 'occasional church,' and indicating that some member of the family recognises the established religion to that extent. The people come to marriages,

and on favourite days like Christmas Day, when a large number of weddings are celebrated at once, the church is filled. It is also crowded on Watch Nights, when they stream in from the streets and public-houses. The best members of the congregation are Board school teachers and others of that class, and such as the numbers are they include a fair proportion of men. Once a month there is a special men's service ; small in numbers present, but devout in character and largely of working class. The large churchyard, laid out with flower-beds and gravel walks and seats, is much frequented on fine Sundays by nursery parties—an elder girl in charge of little brothers and sisters—by women, and by old men.

Not much is done from this church in the way of social agencies, the field being occupied by the Bermondsey Settlement which I have yet to describe ; but before doing so would insert the following quotation from the St. James's Annual Statement (1897-8) which is very applicable here as summing up the careful conclusions of an open mind on the general position of the Church in South London as seen from within :—

"The rector of Bermondsey has lately called attention to the moral, social and economic conditions under which the people live : to the poverty and overcrowding ; to the proportion of pauperism ; to the long and ill-paid hours of labour ; to the intemperance and thriftlessness ; and to the general dingy and hopeless aspect of many lives. These conditions in large measure account for the religious indifference which is so appalling all round. Some characteristics of the indifference may be mentioned.

(1) *The absence of worship* in the lives of the people at large. . . . . The domestic habits of the working classes on Sunday are framed in utter disregard of the church bell.

(2) *A certain suspicion of religion ;* not avowed hostility so much as a misapprehension. Religion to

thousands is something associated with happier conditions of life; a luxury which goes with better food and clothing. Sometimes it is regarded with suspicion as a means of lulling to sleep the spirit of righteous discontent, or a hindrance to the advance of improvement in material conditions.

(3) *A vagueness of religious ideas,* extending to ignorance of religious facts. If anyone doubts this let him get together an audience of Board school children and ask them a few simple questions, beginning with 'How many Gospels are there?' and carefully note the general level of the answers. He will be able to judge what foundation there seems to be for religious life and knowledge.

(4) *Increasing lack of discipline;* I mean the restraint of the home and the influence of parents. This is one of our greatest difficulties in the way of the efficiency of our Sunday schools. No one knows how great it is until he has been shut up with a class of thirty or forty children gathered in from the streets. A desire to teach is valueless nowadays without the rarer qualification of inspiring respect and maintaining order.

As to the cause of this religious indifference; apart from those material conditions of life and habit which have been alluded to, the following hindrances from within have also to be contended with:—

(1) Past neglect.
(2) Want of real knowledge and true sympathy with the working classes.
(3) Desperate attempts to make religion popular.
(4) Association of religion with relief.
(5) Rampant individualism in religion: if united in spirit religious forces would be ten times greater.
(6) (Greatest of all). Want of appreciation of the gravity of the problems presented and the glory of facing them."

The Bermondsey Settlement, which is in the riverside portion of St. James's parish, was founded by the Wesleyans, and its warden is a minister of that deno-

mination, but he would not wish it to be regarded in the light of a Wesleyan Mission. It may be that, but it is something much more. The Settlement is deliberately unsectarian in its aims and methods, and religion altogether is regarded from a detached standpoint. There have been two reasons for this attitude, two objects which it is sought to secure in the interest of their work—the one, to break down all suspicion of Wesleyan propagandism in the minds of the clergy or ministers of other denominations, the other, and even more important, to break down the distrust of the working classes of anything, as they would express it, of the nature of a 'parson trap.' In the view of the warden the failure of the churches and chapels and religious agencies generally both in the past and in the present, as to which he is no less outspoken than the vicar of St. James's, and the suspicion in which they are held by the working classes, is largely due to the fact that in the past they were completely dominated by the middle-class spirit with its unmitigated commercialism, its attitude on questions of public expenditure, and its hostility to the claims and ideals of the labour party.

"It is *persons* that the human and social problem needs, persons coming forward out of a great sympathy . . . . . and it is the fact that Settlements emphasize this need and seek to supply it that makes them of such immense importance to the task of social transformation." The accommodation provided by the Settlement for men and more especially that for women, has been very fairly occupied by those who have come forward in the spirit indicated by the above extract from the report of 1899; and the breadth of their sympathies is shown by the scope of the work undertaken. The report places 'Evangelism' in the forefront, but as this work is mainly done in connection with Southwark Park Chapel, Deptford Lower Road, or from

the little establishment in Silver Street, in far Rotherhithe, I prefer to speak of it in my next chapter and to give to the educational side the first place, which it certainly occupies in the Settlement. It is education in a very broad and social sense. It accepts a Parliamentary Debating Society as Political Science. Physics take the shape of gymnastics, and a mandoline class is not despised under the heading of Music, while Technology consists of 'first aid' ambulance work, nursing, dress-making and cookery. Other and more academical subjects are not wanting, but the numbers attracted to them are small. Altogether there were 1364 entries for classes in this 'College for Working Men and Women,' including about two hundred for University Extension lectures. In every direction the curriculum is eminently practical in its scope. The main thing in the way of music is a choral society, while on the commercial side book-keeping, shorthand and type-writing are the prominent subjects. In Theology, Bible-reading and the study of Christian doctrine and history lead definitely to preparation for Sunday school teaching. Instruction leads on to performance. Concerts are given by the Choral Union. An ambulance brigade carries into practice at the dock-side the instruction received by successive classes, and maintains its existence from day to day by constituting itself as a social club with free-and-easy concerts, to which wives and friends are invited ; so, too, the girls, who learn something of nursing, are formed into a guild to work under the district nurses.

All this is almost as much social as educational, but social work pure and simple is undertaken in the formation and management of clubs. Of these there are six for working girls, 'composed of all classes down to the very roughest,' and a boys' brigade, with subsidiary clubs for games and swimming. There is also a 'Rambling Club' for adults, as well as a working

men's social temperance club, with reading room and library. This last has been accepted as the South side head-quarters of the Dockers' Union.

Picture and industrial exhibitions are arranged and, as at other Settlements, the residents take an active part in local administration, the organization of charity, and philanthropic work of various kinds. The claims of religion (to come back to that) underlie and inspire and sustain the whole fabric, but the object (as of the Congregationalists at Robert Browning Hall) is 'to break free from Ecclesiasticism,' and to preach a broader Christianity which shall 'touch life at all points.'

Once more it is noticeable how similar the developments are which follow, in whatever way or from whatever side the attempt is made to bring about social improvement.

A circuit of the United Methodist Free Church, the work of which falls mainly into our next district, has a chapel in Upper Grange Road which feels the decline of the neighbourhood. The secretary, while admitting the fact, could not understand why it should be so, their system of church government being so democratic. But so it is. 'There is no blinking the fact that the men will not come to church.' 'If you talk to them you find strong religious sentiment, but also a feeling that they do not believe in a parade of piety, and are not inclined to accept the name of any religious sect. They can be won, but it requires a man of a certain type to do it.' So far as they go, everyone connected with the church is of the working class; and there are not in the congregation five persons 'who could give a sovereign and have another left.' It is, however, an active little body of workers and worshippers. Their chapel looks trim, and their voices ring out joyously in the hymns they sing. There is

also a quiet little chapel belonging to the Strict Baptists, the minister of which kindly granted us an interview. This sect does not court publicity. It avoids everything sensational; eschewing flaring advertisements of any kind; and does no 'out-door' work. A quiet spiritual work amongst themselves is carried on, and it is only through the Sunday school, from among the scholars, that adherents are gained. At present the numbers are falling off, owing to the outward drift of the prosperous working-class people from whom the Church members are chiefly drawn, and, already, most of the members live at a distance. The children who attend the Sunday school come from near by. Every effort has been made to get the parents to chapel without success.

There is also a Unitarian Church in Fort Road embarked in social and religious work. It has its Sunday schools, and seeks, by advertising the subjects of the Sunday evening addresses, by flower services and otherwise, to draw in the people.

It is always possible that some of the residents in this district attend churches or chapels elsewhere, but it is at any rate certain that they do not go in any large numbers to those of their own neighbourhood, and that they consist of just that class of whom we learn everywhere that, though respectable, they do not go to church.

South of the railway line, in St. Philip's parish, where Old Kent Road crosses the canal, at the corner by the gasworks, there is a small patch of poverty, and near to it in St. James's Road the Primitive Methodists of Surrey Chapel have established a mission, but find their sphere of work rather in the purple streets to the East of St. James's Road. The Congregationalists at their chapel in the Old Kent Road draw an attendance mainly from the South, but fill their large Sunday school from the poor streets near them.

In their efforts to reach the poor they maintain some active social agencies, including a large slate club. They work harmoniously with the Baptists and Wesleyans, whose churches (Maze Pond and Oakley Place), mentioned in the last chapter, are near by on the opposite side of the Old Kent Road. A joint gathering of the three congregations for the Sunday school anniversary completely filled the largest of these churches one Sunday afternoon with the children, their parents and others. The Mutual Improvement Societies, and the Societies of Christian Endeavour of these chapels arrange united meetings, debates, &c. The Old Kent Road church is one which, like many others in the same position, can do very well so long as the better-off people who have moved away continue to give their support, but absolutely depends on such aid, and finds increasing difficulty in obtaining workers on week evenings. The Congregationalists are far more absolutely limited by class than either Baptists or Wesleyans.

## § 7

### LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

The Vestries of Bermondsey and Rotherhithe, and the St. Olave's Board of Works, have been superseded by the Bermondsey Borough Council. Bermondsey Vestry had for some years evinced a strong progressive municipal spirit, and this has been reproduced in the larger body, so that, in little more than a year from the establishment of the Council, the district can boast the most complete group of municipal buildings in London, excelling even Shoreditch. On one site of three acres off Spa Road it has town hall, library,

baths and washhouses, mortuary, disinfecting station, electric light works, dust destructor, and workshops. Much of this has been done since the time of our inquiry, and the remarks that follow have reference to the old Bermondsey Vestry and the St. Olave's Board of Works. Those concerning Rotherhithe will come in the next chapter.

The *personnel* of the old Vestry was denounced by more than one: 'Ignorant and selfish;' 'indifferent to needs of district;' 'unsatisfactory.' But the officials are reported as active, especially the chief sanitary officer, whose work is generally commented on as being very conscientiously and efficiently done, inspection being, if anything, even too thorough, and thus pressing hardly on poor occupiers. His action seems to have been supported by the Vestry on the whole; and it is probably true that the 'homes of the poor are more healthy and comfortable owing to the enforcement of sanitary law, and the district never so well looked after as now.' 'The Vestry,' says one witness, 'looks well after sanitation.' 'Is quick to reply to complaints,' says another; who adds that 'insanitation is the fault of the people, not of the authorities.' On the whole, the local sanitary administration is praised.

On the subject of housing, we hear that 'there is a great deal of overcrowding;' 'not sensational, but chronic;' 'more than the authorities hear or know of.' 'Housing pressure is great and increasing,' accentuated by railway demolitions and by those of the London County Council for the approaches to the Tower Bridge. Hence we are told: 'Houses difficult to get, and once lost impossible to get another;' and further, that 'private enterprise in building houses is a failure, because it pays better to erect business places.' The Guinness' blocks for poor people are said to be a great boon, but are not full because of the regulations as to children. It is pointed out that 'the overcrowding

is excessive in courts and houses, rather than in the district at large; but the keen demand for houses is sending rents up.' The one and two-room system is almost universal, and every increase in rates is compensated by a turn of the rent screw, whilst the largest and poorest families avoid the increased rent by taking less room. The sanitary inspectors are apparently suspending coercive operations against overcrowding, as something that cannot be prevented under existing conditions.

The drains are watched, but the sewers are insufficient in times of flood. Typhoid and diphtheria are frequent. 'Diphtheria has a partiality for tenement blocks.' 'Health rather bad of late, owing to prevalence of diphtheria.' 'Some diphtheria, but health good on the whole.' 'Good for such a crowded population. No unhealthy employments.' 'Health fairly good, but at a depressed level.' So say our witnesses. The death-rate (22·7) is not excessive, considering that the birth-rate is 32·8. These figures are for 1900.

The streets are kept clean. Most are swept daily, and the rest frequently; but there is not much wood pavement, and no asphalt. The courts are white-washed. The water-carts are provided with a disinfecting spray, and dust is collected twice a week with great regularity.

The Union of St. Olave, which includes within its area Bermondsey and Rotherhithe, has a Board of working men. Out-relief has been more freely given even than in St. Saviour's, and this action is severely condemned on all hands. 'The very worst Union in London,' says one. 'Out-relief given is pernicious,' says another. 'Out-relief given excessively in preference to indoor, mostly to widows. The Irish get a large share.' 'Guardians very nice and charitable, but might look into things a little more.' 'Amazed at

the lavishness of the local Guardians.' Such are other expressions of opinion, and these might be multiplied. Thus is Bermondsey famous, or infamous, for out-relief; but, on the other hand, there are signs that, after a little experience, those elected to support this policy become shaken in their ideas. With the huge number of applicants, sufficient inquiry, they admit, is impossible, and 'the Board is constantly deceived.'

# CHAPTER IV

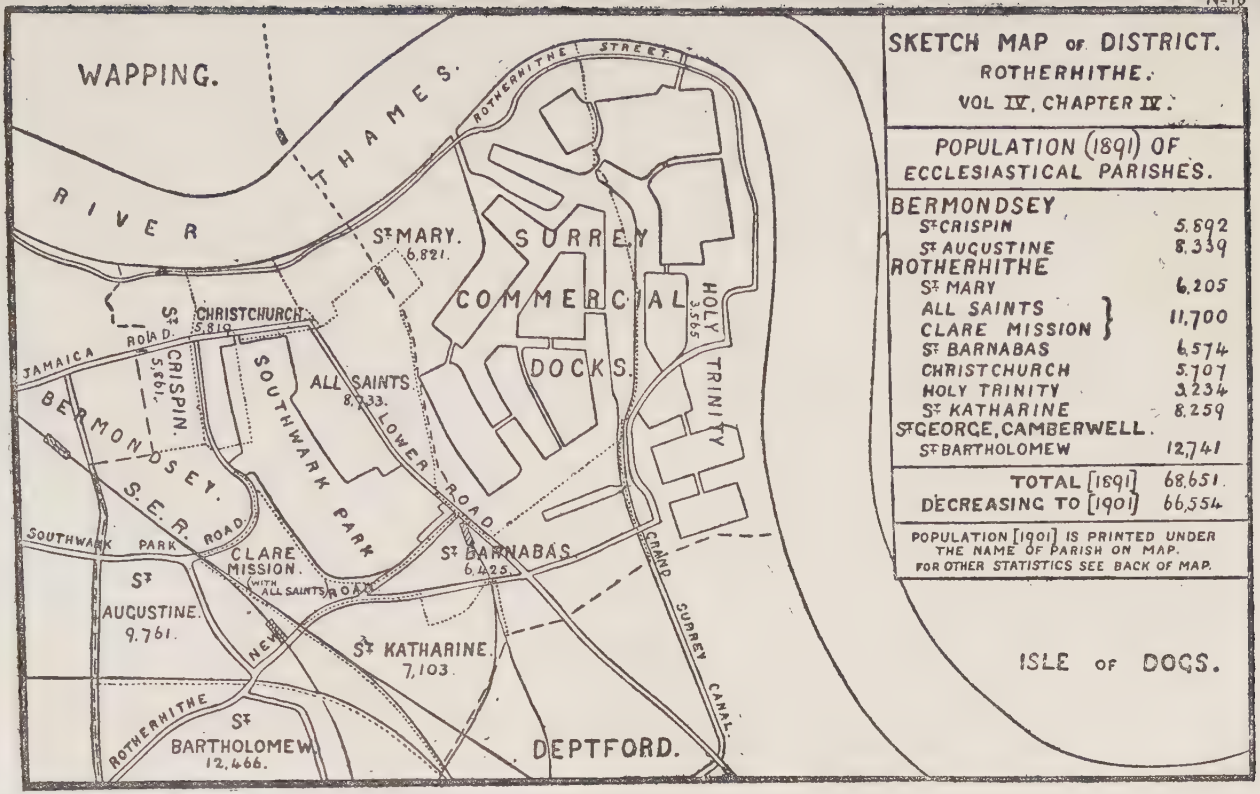
# ROTHERHITHE

## § 1

### THE RIVERSIDE NORTH OF THE PARK

The sketch map on the next page shows a district consisting more of docks than of anything else, and since there are, in addition to these, Southwark Park and the great gash made by the railway, the actual street area is seen to be exceedingly small.

London south of the Thames and east of London Bridge strikes the observer as a compound of tanyard, factory and warehouse; in Rotherhithe we have a seaport. Glimpses are caught of large ships sailing, steaming or towed slowly by, or of tall masts above the high dock walls. Narrow streets with small shops, old houses with carved doorways crushed in between more modern dwellings, men in jerseys with clean shaven upper lips and goatee beards; the names of ship chandlers, or notices of mast and oar, pump and block-makers, sometimes half rubbed out—all proclaim that shipping or seafaring is or has been the main business of the people. The old parts are near the river; the newer district is residential and quite different. The parish of St. Mary, Rotherhithe, with the northern portions of St. Crispin's, Christ Church,




## SKETCH MAP OF DISTRICT.

ROTHERHITHE.

VOL IV, CHAPTER IX.

### POPULATION (1891) OF ECCLESIASTICAL PARISHES.

| | |
|---|---|
| **BERMONDSEY** | |
| St CRISPIN | 5,892 |
| St AUGUSTINE | 8,339 |
| **ROTHERHITHE** | |
| St MARY | 6,205 |
| ALL SAINTS } CLARE MISSION } | 11,700 |
| St BARNABAS | 6,574 |
| CHRISTCHURCH | 5,707 |
| HOLY TRINITY | 3,234 |
| St KATHARINE | 8,259 |
| **St GEORGE, CAMBERWELL.** | |
| St BARTHOLOMEW | 12,741 |
| TOTAL [1891] | 68,651. |
| DECREASING TO [1901] | 66,554 |

POPULATION [1901] IS PRINTED UNDER THE NAME OF PARISH ON MAP.
FOR OTHER STATISTICS SEE BACK OF MAP.

# STATISTICS *bearing on the* AREA INCLUDED IN SKETCH MAP NO. 16. *Described in Chapter IV. (Vol. IV.).*

## CENSUS STATISTICS.

*Showing Increase or Decrease of Population.*

| Population in | | | | Increase or *Decrease* per Cent. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1881. | 1891. | 1896. | 1901. | 1881-1891. | 1891-1901 |
| 36,024 | 39,255 | 40,379 | 38,460 | + 9·0 % | — 1·8 % |

| *Density of Population.* | |
|---|---|
| 1891. | 1901. |
| Persons per Acre. | |
| 52·1 | 51·1 |
| Inhabited Houses. | |
| 5,242 | 5,119 |
| Persons per House. | |
| 7·5 | 7·5 |
| Number of Acres. | |
| 754 | |

*Age and Sex in* 1891.

| Age. | Males. | Females. | Together. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Under 5 years | 2,774 | 2,711 | 5,485 |
| — 15 ,, | 4,800 | 4,725 | 9,525 |
| — 20 ,, | 2,085 | 1,728 | 3,813 |
| — 25 ,, | 1,793 | 1,640 | 3,433 |
| — 35 ,, | 3,073 | 2,781 | 5,854 |
| — 45 ,, | 2,380 | 2,220 | 4,600 |
| — 55 ,, | 1,713 | 1,587 | 3,300 |
| — 65 ,, | 901 | 944 | 1,845 |
| 65 and over | 554 | 846 | 1,400 |
| Totals ... | 20,073 | 19,182 | 39,255 |

NOTE.—The area of the sketch map includes the Registration sub-district of Rotherhithe; the ecclesiastical parishes of St. Crispin and St. Augustine in Bermondsey as well as small portions of St. George, Camberwell, and Deptford. The two Bermondsey parishes are omitted from the figures as well as the portions of St. George's and Deptford; the figures here given referring to Rotherhithe only.

## SPECIAL ENUMERATION FOR THIS INQUIRY (1891).

*Sex, Birthplace and Industrial Status of Heads of Families.*

| Sex. | | Birthplace. | | Industrial Status. | | | Total Heads. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male. | Female. | In London. | Out of London. | Employers | Employees | Neither. | |
| 6,954<br>85 % | 1,268<br>15 % | 4,995<br>61 % | 3,227<br>39 % | 502<br>6 % | 6,301<br>77 % | 1,419<br>17 % | 8,222<br>100 % |

*Constitution of Families.*

| Heads. | Others Occupied. | Unoccupied. | Servants. | Total in Families. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8,222<br>(1·0) | 7,571<br>(·92) | 21,817<br>(2·65) | 333<br>(·04) | 37,943<br>(4·61) |

Social Classification according to *Rooms Occupied* or *Servants Kept.*

| | Persons. | Per Cent. | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4 or more persons to a room | 1,028 | 2·6 | Crowded 28·7 % |
| 3 & under 4 ,, ,, | 2,117 | 5·4 | |
| 2 & ,, 3 ,, ,, | 8,135 | 20·7 | |
| 1 & ,, 2 ,, ,, | 11,357 | 29·0 | Not Crowded 71·3 % |
| Less than 1 person to a room | 1,837 | 4·7 | |
| Occupying more than 4 rooms | 11,815 | 30·1 | |
| 4 or more persons to 1 servant | 993 | 2·5 | |
| Less than 4 persons to 1 servant & 4 to 7 persons to 2 servants | 292 | ·7 | |
| All others with 2 or more servants | 36 | ·1 | |
| Servants in families | 333 | ·8 | |
| Inmates of Institutions (including servants) | 1,312 | 3·4 | |
| Total | 39,255 | 100 | |
| Living in Poverty (as estimated in 1889) | | 46.7 % | 100 % |
| ,, in Comfort ( ,, ,, ) | | 53.3 % | |

and All Saints', are in effect an extension of the river front described in the last chapter ; while the rest of the three last-mentioned parishes, with Clare Mission and St. Augustine's, are a continuation of St. James's and St. Anne's, in a comfortable, prosperous working-class district adjoining Southwark Park.

North of the Park the care of the rough poor who occupy Paradise Street and the dark blue courts near the river, falls largely to the Roman Catholics, to whose work allusion has already been made. The attendance at Mass here went up greatly when the local church was opened, for the people had previously a full mile to walk. Outside of the Roman Catholics, and apart from the action of the parish churches, the work of religion and charity is undertaken by a series of small missions of the treat-giving pauperizing kind. The poor Catholics are great beggars, and when they have exhausted the funds available at their own church, they take whatever is offered by others; but if this assistance is given with proselytizing aim, as in some cases it seems to be, the effect is *nil.*

The people are not all of Irish blood, and those not Irish are not Catholic, but except under subsidy other forms of religion make no headway here, and the most characteristic inhabitants are Cockney Irish. They have made these streets their home for years, and may be London Irish of the second or third generation, but they retain their names and racial characteristics as well as their religion. The children are dirty and perhaps barefoot, but none the less sturdy; the parents lack the pride that might sacrifice food to appearance. Drink is the main evil both among men and women, and quarrels follow, generally beginning, it is said, with the women, the men coming in at the end. Their behaviour is very disorderly, but not to be called criminal. The police intervene as little as possible, but at times

an entire household has to be taken to the station. A rescue may be organized and a fight with the police result, but the police are not interfered with unless they interfere. There are few strangers or passers by in these streets. In one of the worst, said however to be better than it used to be, 'a boot whizzed past;' 'meant for the wife, not for us,' was our guide's comment, and the boot hurt no one. The language of the children is forcible and suggestive of what they are accustomed to hear; a little girl of about eight years means no harm when she calls to her baby brother, 'Come out of the street you d—— little b——.'

The district has long been condemned as insanitary, and, it is said, is really to be demolished now; indeed, a commencement has been made, but hitherto its impending fate has merely served as a reason for letting it be. Some of the houses are closed by order and boarded up, but this does not prevent the evicted from creeping back, gaining an entrance by some means and establishing themselves behind the boarded windows. To such quarters the very poorest naturally gravitate.

In spite of bad sanitation health is wonderfully good, for the people live largely in the open air, and the air at Rotherhithe, between river, park and docks, is wholesome and good to breathe. A lady, who devotes herself to mission work here, came to it as an invalid twenty-six years ago, and at that time was only given a few months to live.

St. Crispin's and Christ Church share with St. Mary's the work of the Church of England in this waterside area. Both have mission centres, and connected with Christ Church there is a small College Settlement with a club house. The clergy are hopeful of the temporal, but not of the spiritual work. 'The people from the riverside don't go up to the churches and never will.' It is suggested that they, like the

Roman Catholics, require a 'special altar' on the spot, but it is more than doubtful whether its provision would make any difference.

## § 2

### THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF SOUTHWARK PARK

As we pass from parts bordering upon the river the scene changes. The houses are lower, they have back gardens, the sky can be seen without a rick in the neck, and the people grow more responsive. Religion fills a larger place in their lives, or in the lives of a larger proportion, and in one or two instances does this in so marked a degree as to demand special study. The increase of vitality is not found with every church, but it does apply to all denominations.

Any one walking through the district cannot but be conscious of the extent to which public attention is called to the affairs of the Churches. In every street there are bills—sometimes half the houses have them in their windows—bearing announcements of special services, or lectures, or entertainments of one kind or another connected with the Churches. Congregationalists, Methodists, Presbyterians, High Church and Low Church, even Baptists, all float along on the wave of religious life mingled with pleasure that brings young people to the front.

The outward drift of the better-to-do is noted, but those who take their places come in search of respectability and find it, and thus the district suffers little. The girls of this class shun the factories, many going to the City to become waitresses in tea-rooms, or to take up some such work. The young people, as a rule, secure better positions than their parents.

On the borders of this territory, facing southward, with its mission work in the rear, stands Christ Church ; and alongside of it is a very old-established Congregational church.

The latter has lately celebrated its two hundred and thirty-seventh anniversary. In a church so ancient as this it is not surprising that innovations should be regarded with suspicion ; but even here modern ideas begin to prevail. There is an excellent trained choir ; music is made a great deal of, and 'Pleasant Saturday Evenings' have been inaugurated. These, if the programme is attractive, draw large audiences, but mainly from their own people, although, like the subjects of the pastor's Sunday addresses, they are widely advertised. At the regular morning and evening services there is a fair attendance.

At Christ Church the work is more distinctly and intensely religious and the people respond very well. At the evening service the church is quite full, and although, as has been seen, the response does not come at all from the poor part of the parish lying to the north of the church, the congregation is largely working class, as indeed any numerous congregation must be in this neighbourhood. People of this class not only share in the work of the Church, but also support it financially. In the accounts the number of quite small subscriptions is noticeable, and teas and entertainments not only pay their own expenses, but help the funds needed for other things.

Throughout this district the problems of poverty and drink, of irregular work and irregular lives, lie behind, and are the skeleton at the feast ; but further South, along either side of Southwark Park, we escape from their shadow. They are at least no longer serious parochial questions, and the religious bodies spread themselves out joyously in the ways I have described, while the numbers of those who come to church, though they

may fall short of what is desired, are quite considerable and moreover almost entirely of the working class. But with this success comes a danger, the danger of loss of reverence, the danger that the things of religion may cease to be sacred. I may give an instance: In one of the parish churches where I was kneeling at the back, there were seated not far off from me two well-dressed young girls, who maintained a whispered conversation through the prayers, and, when I looked round, merely dropped their voices still lower, as though that were all that was necessary for good behaviour.

This is a great neighbourhood for 'Pleasant Sunday Afternoons,' sometimes arranged for mixed congregations and sometimes as special 'Men's Own' services. The ostensible object is always to reach those who do not come to church, and either bring them into communion, or, if that is out of the question, then at least to add the touch of religion to the attractions that go to make a popular gathering possible. As regards the meetings to which both sexes and all ages are invited, the primary object, that of reaching the non-churchgoer, is hardly ever attained. It is their own people who come, or, if strange faces are seen, they are almost invariably those of the *habitués* elsewhere, out for the day and taking 'a stage-coachman's holiday.' Practically no one else is drawn in. The 'hearty welcome' offered is regarded by outsiders with suspicion; 'in vain the net is spread.' It is only otherwise when the music given is so attractive and the numbers of strangers so great that individuality is lost; and then any religious value is probably lost too. And whether those who come are members of the congregation itself or of other congregations or are outsiders, these services amount to little more than the provision of an innocent form of amusement for Sunday afternoon: from the religious point of view

they are important only as a symptom of congregational life.

The 'Men's Own' is something quite different, and itself assumes two distinct shapes. In the one case a comparatively small number of exceptionally religious-minded men meet one of the clergy or the minister in the church for an hour on Sunday afternoon and join in a religious service which includes prayers and the singing of hymns, with the reading of a lesson from the Bible, and concludes with an address aimed specially at the moral or religious difficulties of men. Nothing could be more serious, and the result is to go a little deeper into these matters than at other times. There can be no doubt about the religious value of such a service, but only rarely will the men who take kindly to this exercise be those who would otherwise make no profession. The other extreme is to bring together as many men as possible on Sunday afternoon to a meeting that, to me, seems to lack all the essentials of religion. Some of the forms are indeed retained. Prayer is offered, and a lesson read, and hymns are sung, but never for one moment does the impression of 'an entertainment' pass away. No feelings of reverence are aroused. An orchestra plays for half an hour before the 'chair' is taken, and also occasionally during the meeting, and there is usually a lady soloist in attendance who sings sacred songs at intervals, or may give a moral recitation. The address is generally on some social question, and all London is ransacked to provide a variety of speakers. If religion is introduced at all it is in sensational garb and set in language which courts applause.

If well organized, a meeting like this will draw crowds of working men and others of the next class upwards; and whether to be called religious or not, there is much to be said for and little against such

meetings as a way of spending Sunday afternoon. This is so, especially, if the attendance becomes habitual. The door is always open for a more definite religious motive to come in; a chance or probability depending on the character of the leaders. But the lower achievement is easy, the higher very difficult. In every case the meetings, to be successful, must be for men alone. Between the two extremes, between the large public and the small almost private meeting, a compromise is sometimes found, and then there results a gathering which, while retaining some of the features of a popular entertainment, and even though very polemical addresses may be given, is yet definitely religious in tone and entirely congregational in character. This result, when accomplished, reflects the individuality of the leader.

All these various ways of encouraging church attendance are represented in this neighbourhood. The Baptists and Wesleyans, the Congregationalists and, I believe, the Presbyterians also, have each P.S.A.'s of the mixed kind, for both sexes, being in effect merely pleasant congregational meetings. The Church of England, at St. James's, Bermondsey, and Christ Church, Rotherhithe, has 'Men's Own' of the small and serious character. While of the other description the best example I know is that afforded by the meeting at the Rotherhithe Town Hall, in connection with Mr. Richardson's Free Church. Between the two, partaking somewhat of both, is the meeting for men at Mr. Kaye Dunn's United Free Methodist Church called 'Manor.'*

* The Men's Own services of the kind, or kinds, described above must not be confused with those arranged from time to time in order to deal from the pulpit with the special difficulties, temptations and sins of men; from which women are excluded in the interest of frank speech. The difference is emphasized by the fact that at those of the P.S.A. type women are very usually present; not among the audience, but as performers in the orchestra, and their contributions are received with enthusiasm.

The ordinary congregational work of these churches is successful, and though they all suffer from the loss of old members who move further out, they also find the incoming population fairly responsive. The Wesleyan Church is one of those connected in its circuit with the Bermondsey Settlement, but the relation is never emphasized, for if Wesleyanism were obtruded at the Settlement, a large proportion of those now working or attending there might take offence. But the Warden is the head of the circuit, and the Southwark Park church comes in for many crumbs that fall from the well-spread table of the Settlement. The Presbyterian minister speaks of his as a 'poor church, but a growing cause,' of his people as being loyal and having 'grit,' and as giving generously, according to their means, for the maintenance of the church, and when needed for the help of their own poor members. They are almost all of the working class. Their new church was completed and opened in 1901.

The Baptists in Drummond Road complain, as do the Wesleyans, of the loss of members by removal. There is fashion in the matter. Those who bicycle, for instance, prefer Dulwich as a starting-point, and even working-class people dislike to say they live in Bermondsey. But, if this applies to the working class, it applies still more to the class above, and it is these mainly who go. The result on the conduct of this church is evident; for the congregation, which had been accustomed to seek mission work elsewhere, now feels the need of concentration on its own corporate life. This, however, is really a healthy sign; for the outside missions were not only a drain on resources, but were apt to take away individuals whose presence was needed at the central church, and whose connection therewith, save for attendance at the monthly communion service, was in danger of becoming nominal.

The Congregationalists in Jamaica Road have been already mentioned.

Mr. Kaye Dunn's church is connected with the Bermondsey and Rotherhithe circuit of the United Free Methodists, and has waxed while the church in Upper Grange Road has waned. A third church belonging to the circuit is in Albion Street, between the docks and the river, in a very poor neighbourhood, and here the work is described as disheartening. We may therefore, in considering Mr. Dunn's success, contrast it with comparative, if not positive failure at the other two; and all three are lying within a mile of one another.

Twenty or thirty years ago, the chapel at Albion Street was the most successful in the neighbourhood, but it has at present less than fifty members, and the numbers are still going down. It is the old story. The neighbourhood has become poor, and their people have gone. Mr. Heatley, who is now at the King's Own Mission, Kennington, had this pulpit for a while, and tried to put some new life into the place. He worked on mission lines, and succeeded to some extent, but his methods were distasteful to the old members and he left. His successor also is now leaving, or has gone, for he too could not be content to pursue the path laid down for him. This is not the only instance in which we have found the fresher sympathies of the minister held in suppression by the chilling influence of those around him. But the truth is, that this particular church is not well placed for any form of success. The poor who now live round it would not be likely to respond, and it is very doubtful whether even a man like Mr. Dunn could make of it a prosperous concern.

To appreciate the situation it is only necessary to look at the map. The church stands at the east end of Albion Street, in an isolated district almost entirely

poor. There is not one single pink street, nor is any red marked at all, except St. Mary's vicarage. The requisite social material is wanting. But Manor Chapel, though itself situated amid a group of purple streets, from which no doubt are drawn most of the children who fill its Sunday school, as well as some of its poorer members, is, in fact, surrounded by a mass of pink streets, in which dwell that comfortable working and lower middle class, whose readiness to share in religious life and religious amusements is the characteristic of this neighbourhood. It is, I think, mainly from these streets that the congregation comes, and from them that the 'Men's Own' brotherhood and the strong body of voluntary workers are drawn. The mission tries to touch all classes living in the neighbourhood, and in one way or other may do so, but the lowest class of our population is not represented here at all. The people who attend its services are regarded as being able to pay for what the church does. 'Copper collections' are the great source of income. For these collections silver is not taken—change is given.

The contrast with the chapel in Albion Street is very marked: there an exclusive body of well-to-do subscribers, the remnant of the old congregation, so absolute in power, but so limited in number, that it would become a serious problem as to 'what we should do financially if two or three of them left,' and with hardly any volunteers available even for the teaching in a Sunday school; and here at 'Manor' democratic ease and equality, a crowded church, an overflowing exchequer (though it be of copper), and a hundred volunteers for schools or whatever requires to be done.

The minister at the Manor Church is indeed a remarkable personality, with great power of organization, energy and assurance—a bold advertiser and gifted with a directness of speech which, when it comes

from one whose heart is in his work, is the best form of pulpit eloquence; but even such a man could not make his bricks without straw.

The church in Grange Road lays claim to the same democratic spirit, but is not so successful, partly because it does not command the same personal force; but beyond this, as I believe, because of the decadence of its surroundings. The streets are still pink, but there is an outward drift that carries away the more solidly successful of the working classes, with those of the class just above, attracted towards the park, robbing the religious centre of its best members and finally leaving it without the human material needed for the production of a democratic church.

The success of Mr. Richardson at the Free Church in Lower Road is of the same kind as that of Mr. Dunn, but much greater and more surprising. It is no doubt traceable to the same general causes, but there is something more, which I conceive to lie in the perfect harmony in tone of thought maintained between the preacher and his flock. He can and does confidently give them of his very best, and they with open hearts respond. It is real spiritual work on a very large scale. The building, which serves for church and school by turns, and is seated for over a thousand, is fairly filled on Sunday morning and crowded at night, while the 'Men's Own,' which is at any rate to some extent a spiritual work, is one of the very largest of its kind. This meeting is held on Sunday afternoon in the large Town Hall, which also accommodates over a thousand, and every seat is filled. The men include many who come to the services of the church, as well as many who do not. There is also a "Women's Own," but the women are no doubt all members of the regular congregation. An attempt to bring 'non-churchgoers,' of both sexes, to a 'People's Service' in the Town Hall on Sunday night has been abandoned. The

interest of the work lies not in futile efforts of that description, but in the fact that a genuine self-supporting working-class church, filled with spiritual life and quickening energy, has been created, and created, moreover, by a man who goes every week-day morning to his work in the City, and is kept there by it till seven at night. He is, in fact, an employee of one of the telegraph companies. In his spare hours he has done this thing. For it he receives a small stipend, all of which probably he spends upon the work. Baptist doctrines are preached, but not made a condition of membership. There is no belief in the 'Social Evangel;' what is provided is 'nothing but the Gospel.'

Mr. Richardson has been doing this work for more than six years, following a man who had also been successful. Previously he was for about seventeen years—that is from boyhood—connected with Mr. Charrington's work at the Great Assembly Hall in Mile End Road. To his work in South-East London he brought this experience, but has put the work upon an altogether higher plane. It is probable that what he has succeeded in accomplishing here would be as impossible in the Mile End Road as the work of the Great Assembly Hall would be at Rotherhithe. Of Rotherhithe Mr. Richardson says, 'It is like a little village—quite unlike London generally. Everybody knows everybody else;' and he adds that 'as you near Bermondsey this characteristic is lost,' thus confirming the view I have expressed, that environment is the explanation, if not of the fact of success, at least of the kind of success which religion can command.

The undertaking called St. Winifred's, though with quite different aim, is similar to that of Mr. Richardson's Free Church in so far that Mr. Morriss, the founder and president and inspiring force, also earns his living as a clerk in the City. It began as a botany class, became a boys' school, and has expanded into

a mission. The work is still mainly among children and young people. It is religious, scriptural and Protestant, and is entirely voluntary. All is done for love. The necessary work is shared, whether it be door-keeping or sweeping out, and everything looks spick and span. The success attained has been due to the tone given to the work by the character of the founder, and to the persistence with which his ideas have been followed out. Of his boys more than a hundred have been placed in the City as clerks or office boys, and nearly all, he says, are doing well, and at Manor Chapel and elsewhere in the neighbourhood numbers of his old boys may be found teaching in the Sunday school. All this the class of boys and their environment has made possible.

It is to be noted that the 'Popular high-class Entertainments for the People' that used to take place every Saturday night in connection with this mission, and which had been a great success, have been checked by the opening of a new local theatre, and can now only be given successfully when some special programme is arranged.

In the district in which all these popular forms of religion flourish there is a tendency, almost unknown elsewhere, for the purple streets to become pink instead of the opposite. In spite of some outward movement of the better-to-do of which we have spoken, there is improvement rather than decadence. This is attributed to the improved access to the City afforded by the opening of the Tower Bridge; to the general convenience of the train services; to a realization of the value of the great open spaces of the park and docks which, coupled with the lowness of the houses, give light and air; to the abundance of houses having gardens at comparatively low rents; and last, but not least, to the fact that the houses have been built for the class that occupies them.

The Church of England is, on the whole, less successful than are the Nonconformists. St. Crispin's Church is large and All Saints' small. Both are very empty. At All Saints' there is a large loan and slate club, the work of an energetic layman, but it 'brings no spiritual strength to the church.' Clare College Mission is a small affair, but is active in its way, and still more so is St. Augustine's. There is no difficulty in finding parish workers here. The Sunday school is well served although the numbers of the children are diminishing; the choir is better and stronger than has been the case for a long time; the district visitors have increased in number, and the visiting from house to house among the sick and afflicted is carried out with care and knowledge of the people. But the vicar still complains how 'few people will attend church with any system or regularity.' Continuity is the great stumbling block, although 'monthly popular services,' we are told, 'have done something to arouse fresh interest.' 'The choir, for instance, can only bring in a good attendance when they make an extra effort,' and although 'lantern picture services attract those we greatly desire to get,' they 'easily become stale.' 'There are such quantities of Sunday attractions: bicycle excursions, P.S.A.'s, Town Halls, Cathedrals, music in parks and halls, perpetual visits from and to friends. Sunday is no longer dull;' and this dulness the vicar confesses 'was our salvation physically as well as spiritually.' I quote his opinions not only for their inherent interest, but as confirming indirectly the picture I have given of the whole neighbourhood, of which his parish forms part.

## § 3

### ROUND THE DOCKS

Church Street, Rotherhithe, starting from the north end of Lower Road, pursues a serpentine course till it comes to the parish church, now shut out from the river, which once it overlooked, by the great rumbling flour mills of Rotherhithe Street. Everywhere the river frontage has been of such paramount commercial value that all other values have been lost. Only here and there through some narrow passage leading to the stairs used by the watermen of old can access be had, or any glimpse be obtained of the great river. One of these stairs that has been preserved to us is at the foot of Princes Street, which leading directly from Church Street to the river may perhaps have taken the place of a field path. It is a handsome street. The houses, dating from 1726, have carved door-posts and lintels and panelled passages within; they were built for ships' captains in the days when merchant captains were merchant traders also. The tombs of some of these men, with curious half-effaced inscriptions, may be seen in the churchyard which, though crowded with square box tombs and headstones crushed together, yet retains its charm of trees and birds and greenery. There is also an old watch-house and a free school, which was founded in 1613 and removed to its present situation in 1797. All around are the houses of the poor. Here they live, not, indeed, in Paradise Street, but in Adam Gardens, Eve Place and Seth Street. Clearly it is after the Fall. Here too, suggesting other ideas, are Albion Street, already mentioned in connection with the Methodist Free Church, and Temeraire Street, leading to the Dock wall above which tower the great ships' masts. Beyond this group of poor streets, St. Mary's parish extends over the greater part of the area of the docks.

The rest of the dock space is in the parish of Holy Trinity, the inhabited part of which is a mere fringe of houses between docks and river following the bend of the Thames, until near the church the inhabited area becomes a little wider and forms a straggling village, very picturesque and quiet. Trinity Church, with its handsome square tower, was described by the vicar, not unjustifiably, as the most inaccessible point in London, but a road recently opened through the docks has brought it somewhat nearer the outer world, and now and again an omnibus drags its way across. The old inhabitants love the place ; nothing would induce them to move elsewhere. It is as isolated as Millwall, but possesses a charm which is entirely lacking to the Isle of Dogs.

In this ribbon of a parish, the work of the Church is carried on under difficulties aggravated by neglect in the past and by straitened finance in the present. It has also a full share of chapels and missions, but at none of them, any more than at the church, is there any large attendance. The Wesleyans have here another of the churches on the circuit connected with the Bermondsey Settlement, and the Roman Catholics have a chapel and convent. There is also a trim Scandinavian Church to meet the special needs of sailors from the Baltic. None of these have the air of being in London.

## § 4

### SOUTH OF THE PARK

The parishes of St. Barnabas and St. Katharine to the north of the railway and St. Bartholomew to the south, which complete the district, are alike in being surrounded and cut off by railways and docks from the rest of the world, and the populations seem to suffer in vitality. In St. Barnabas parish, where the Church is dead, there is an old chapel occupied now by a little body of the Brethren; working people all. According to the custom of this body they meet every Sunday morning for the 'breaking of bread.' But with them this celebration leads to something beyond the material form of a spiritual mystery, for they buy as much bread as they can afford, good 4 lb. loaves, for final distribution at the evening service. The bread provided comes to as much as forty quartern loaves on nine or ten Sunday evenings in each quarter, the frequency and amount of the distribution depending upon the state of their finances, whilst the number of outsiders who come depends, it is frankly admitted, on the amount of bread going. 'You should see us to-morrow night,' said one of the leaders, a weather-beaten man, apparently a lighterman, as he brought one of the loaves to show what good stuff it was; 'we shall be full.' They look after their own poor and would give cash to members if needed. The gift of bread, which is mainly for others, would not be sought they think except by the really poor. They do not find that it brings them members. Such new members as join come from other sects.

There is also a small Baptist congregation which formerly occupied the chapel now used by the Brethren, but at present conducts its services in the schools. It is a little body of working men, fewer in number even than the Brethren. None are well off, but 'by

careful management keep decent homes and dress respectably.' These Baptists tell us that the Congregationalists, who also have a chapel here, are a smaller body still, and the account we have received from its minister confirms this. Yet in each of these little churches lies far more real religious life than can here be found in the parish church.

The work at St. Bartholomew's is much more active. The Sunday schools are large, the baptisms numerous, and the district visitors steadily employed as collectors for the provident fund. All is well organized, but the congregations are small. The Baptists in this parish have perhaps the largest congregation, but their supporters are drawn to a considerable extent from outside and only do mission work on the spot. Of the people in the district not one in twenty, they say, are regular attenders at any church. Sunday is the day for visiting, and the Sunday paper is much in evidence.

Finally there is St. Katharine's, where, and where only in this part of London, we find extreme ritual. It is certainly successful in its way—more so than any other of the parish churches hereabouts with the exception of Christ Church. It is probable, since parish boundaries are lightly overstepped, that the congregation is in part drawn from the surrounding parishes, and the vicar of All Saints', whose church lies between Christ Church and St. Katharine's, complains that he is robbed from both sides. St. Katharine's offers excellent music and great beauty of architecture and decoration, as well as advanced ritual. Women and children form the greater part of the congregation. With them the church is fairly filled. Perhaps some attend for the sake of the charitable relief that is given, for St. Katharine's is described as 'good to the poor.' We find in this church very devout behaviour among the worshippers and that

consciousness of being in the house of God which some natures must find sadly wanting in the popular forms of religion whose success we have been noting. Such impulses and sensibilities belong to men as well as women, but do not at present seem to be shared at all by the men of our working classes.

## § 5

### LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

The Vestry of Rotherhithe, as already said, has been merged in the Borough of Bermondsey. The opinions expressed as to its work were on the whole favourable, as the following extracts will show:—'Local Government active and good, much better than it was.' 'Is in the hands of the Progressives, but does its work well.' The change for the better occurred with the advent of a more democratic constituency. 'The work of the Vestry is good,' says another. These remarks are all from clergy of the Church of England. It is, however, complained that the sanitary authorities, though good enough if woke up, do not take action with as much promptitude as might be desired. They need telling very often before they will move.

Crowding is increasing and rents are rising. In one large block three rooms cost 8*s* 6*d*, and the cheapest, two rooms on the top floor, 5*s* 9*d*. An inquiry made by the Vestry showed, in many cases, a rise of 1*s* a week within twelve months. Efforts have been made to clear people out of insanitary cellars, but there is nowhere for them to go to, and it is difficult to enforce the law. Again, we hear that in spite of the unsatisfactory condition of the houses health is wonderful, this being due to life in the streets and to the fresh air from

parks, docks, and railways. 'Everybody notices how sturdy and strong the children are.' Rheumatism and bronchitis, chest and heart troubles, are prevalent, but the place is naturally healthy.

The London County Council are about to undertake the great work of constructing a tunnel under the Thames between Limehouse and Rotherhithe. It is to be a roadway like that between Blackwall and Greenwich, but the tube will be of larger diameter, and the traffic is likely to be far greater.

## DESCRIPTIVE NOTES. Map P (Vol. IV., Chapters I.-IV.). Inner South.

Adjoining Maps—**N.** West Central (Vol. II.) and Inner East (Vol. II.); **E.** Isle of Dogs (Vol. I.) and Deptford (Vol. V.); **S.** Outer South (Vol. VI.); **W.** Westminster (Vol. III.).

**General Character.**—The map comprises the districts of Vauxhall, North Lambeth, Southwark, the Borough, Horselydown, Bermondsey, Rotherhithe, which lie along the river bank, and Kennington, Newington, Walworth, part of North Camberwell and South Bermondsey, which lie behind them.

The characteristics of the riverside districts are wharves, warehouses and factories, the latter tending to increase at the expense of population. The whole is getting poorer, as the better-off move outwards, and their place is taken by the poor displaced by the construction of factories, new streets and railway widenings. Larger and more numerous blots of extreme poverty are found in this than in any other map. Lambeth is known as the residence of the English Primate, for its extensive pottery works, and for its large and poor working-class population; Southwark, for its courts and alleys, its wharves and factories, and for its old-standing poverty; the Borough for its poor courts (most of which are now demolished) and its vegetable and hop markets; Bermondsey for its rough Irish population, its tanneries and jam factories; Rotherhithe for its large docks and air of a sea-port; Kennington, Newington, Walworth and North Camberwell for their working-class population, tending to become poorer and more crowded, the general colouring changing from pink to purple. Servants are rarely kept even in the main streets.

**Poverty Areas.**—The most marked poverty areas in the map are, (1) that lying between Union Street and Borough Road in Southwark, which includes the Friar Street and Grotto areas and the courts off the Borough High Street (*vide* p. 9); (2) that between Great Dover Street and Long Lane, which covers the Tabard Street area (*vide* p. 117); (3) that between Union Road and the river in Rotherhithe (*vide* p. 143). Speaking more generally, there is in North Lambeth much light blue with small patches of dark blue, due to poor incomers from Westminster, and to the presence of labourers employed in wharves, pottery works, dust yards and gas works; in Southwark, much dark blue and black both in courts and streets, caused by a large demand for rough outside labour, by a traditional reputation for vice, by incomers from the Drury Lane neighbourhood and by the presence of the lowest class of prostitutes, bullies and racecourse thieves; in Bermondsey, much dark blue, due to Irish waterside labourers and fish curers, and a rough class employed in wharves, markets and leather factories; in Rotherhithe, much dark blue, due to waterside labourers and gas workers; in Kennington, Newington, Walworth, North Camberwell and South Bermondsey—*i.e.*, the outer fringes of the inner districts—poverty is generally of a lighter hue, and is due to incomers and to 'local rubbish-heaps' of degraded poor. There is so much poverty that areas which would call for special mention in any other map must be omitted here. In general character they do not greatly differ.

**Employments.**—There is a large demand for unskilled labour and a still larger supply. Wharves, warehouses and factories line the river, which washes three sides of these districts. There are in North Lambeth hospital students and nurses, police, railway men, pottery workers, and waiters employed north of the river. Waterloo railway station is a large centre of employment. There are also blacklead works, shot works, timber yards, dust yards, a jam factory and a brewery, employing many men and

women. In Southwark there are breweries, oil mills, cocoa and sweet factories, boot and hat factories, stationery and printing works, &c., and railway goods' yards in the Borough High Street, &c.; in Bermondsey there are the London Bridge terminus and the Bricklayers' Arms goods' station, biscuit works, jam factories, leather factories, &c. In Rotherhithe, the Surrey Commercial Docks and the gas works are the chief local centres of employment. Of the outer districts, Kennington is known for the number of theatrical and music-hall artistes living there, Walworth for its costers and cabmen, and Newington for its printers. The poorest are the casual dockworkers, gutter merchants, cheap basket makers, market porters and fish curers among the men; and fur pullers, sack, bag and accoutrement makers, dust pickers and jam workers among the women. Those who go out of the district to work are shop assistants, hotel waiters, clerks, police, mechanics, theatre and music-hall employees, and a number of those employed in the Strand and Fleet Street printing offices.

**Housing and Rents.**—Houses are being demolished, accommodation decreases, rents are rising; factories, warehouses, railway arches and new roads replace dwelling houses; new building for human habitation takes the form of model dwellings and tenement houses. These statements are generally true of the whole district, but apply especially to Southwark and Bermondsey. Block dwellings and tenement houses are features of the area lying more immediately south of the New Kent Road. Few of the houses in these districts, except those in the main roads or round some squares in Kennington and Walworth, were built for occupation by a wealthy middle class. There is much crowding in the central districts, and this tends to increase—overcrowding of the poorest classes is more marked in parts of Southwark and Bermondsey than in any other districts in London; here it is the overcrowding of English and Irish, and not of Jews, as in Whitechapel. From the earliest times there have been poor people and poor houses in Southwark and Bermondsey.

In North Lambeth the general colouring is purple and light blue, the houses two storeyed, the rent asked in poor cottages being 5*s* to 5*s* 6*d* for two rooms and backyard; in a 'dark blue' court 2*s* 6*d* and 3*s* per room; in a "purple" street, new tenements let for 8*s* 6*d* and 9*s* 6*d* per floor of three rooms, and six-roomed houses for 14*s* and 15*s* a week. In new buildings built by one of the railway companies under a "rehousing" agreement, the rents asked are 9*s* for three rooms, and the tenants police, postmen, and railway men.

In Southwark, which consists largely of warehouses, &c., interspersed with dwellings inhabited by a very poor and sometimes bad class of people, the rent in a 'dark blue' street of two-storeyed cottages was 6*s* for two rooms and a small yard. In buildings belonging to the Metropolitan Industrial Dwellings Company, and tenanted by a rough class, rents are 3*s* to 3*s* 6*d* for single rooms, 4*s* 6*d* to 5*s* 6*d* for two rooms, and 7*s* to 7*s* 6*d* for three rooms. Common lodging-houses, of which there are a large number, charge 4*d* per night.

In Bermondsey single rooms in the poorest streets run from 3*s* to 5*s*, In a respectable poor class street (purple) of two-storeyed houses with 15 ft. frontage, 11*s* to 12*s* was asked for five rooms and a good back yard. In new model dwellings (pink) the rents were 2*s* 6*d* to 3*s* for one room, 4*s* 6*d* to 5*s* for two, and 6*s* to 7*s* 6*d* for three rooms. In the Guinness Buildings, of which there are large blocks in Snow's Fields and Page's Walk, the rents run from 2*s* 9*d* to 6*s* 9*d* for one to four rooms.

In the 'pink' streets between Southwark Park and the Bricklayers' Arms Station rents in two-storeyed houses, with fair backs, are 14*s* 6*d* for six rooms and wash-house; two families usual per house.

In Rotherhithe there are poor houses along the river bank, and a few

pink streets round Southwark Park. In a 'dark blue' court 4*s* was paid for two rooms with wash-house and yard; 8*s* for four rooms with yard and wash-house; 5*s* for two rooms and wash-house; all these with very poor, but not shifting tenants, the houses having a 12 ft. frontage and built of old yellow brick. Rent for newer houses 12*s* for four rooms, with scullery and wash-house.

In the 'pink' streets fringing Kennington, Walworth and Bermondsey, 8*s* is asked for three rooms, with kitchen and scullery in new four-storeyed buildings, and 6*d* per week is further charged for gas and cleaning the stairs; new tenants have to make a deposit of 24*s*, which acts as an effectual bar to poor families. Off the north side of Albany Road 14*s* and 15*s* is asked for the two-storeyed houses with six rooms, and tenanted by a fairly comfortable class; further East in the new estate of South Bermondsey, south of the railway, half houses with four rooms fetch 7*s*. These were the rents in 1899, but since then there has been a further increase.

**Markets.**—Lambeth Walk, Lower Marsh and the New Cut, London Road, East Street, Walworth Road (between East Street and Westmoreland Road, extending some way down the latter), Old Kent Road, Bermondsey New Road, Jamaica Road, Southwark Park Road (between St. James's Road and the railway), and part of the Lower Road Rotherhithe, are the principal street-markets. The New Cut and East Street markets are known all over London. Some prices in the New Cut: Good pork chops, 6½*d* per lb., meat scraps from 2*d* to 3½*d* per lb.; good rump steaks, 9*d* to 11*d* per lb., mutton chops 8*d* and 9*d* per lb., uncooked sheeps' heads, 5*d* each; best eggs, 3 for 2½*d*—'special line' 24 for 1*s*; a whole skinned rabbit, 6½*d*; half a cooked chicken (not appetising), 8*d* and 9*d*; bread, 4*d* per 4-lb. loaf (May, 1899). In Lambeth Walk, fair bacon was to be had for between 4*d* and 6*d* per lb., Canterbury lamb at 4½*d* per lb., bread at 3¾*d* and 4*d* per 4-lb. loaf (June, 1899). In Jamaica Road scraps of meat 2*d* and 3*d* per lb., good chops, 6*d* per lb., rump steak, 10*d* per lb.; cherries, 4*d* per lb., gooseberries, 3*d* per pint; bread, 4½*d* per quartern.

**Public-houses.**—The number of licensed houses is most noticeable in Southwark; North Lambeth, Bermondsey, and Rotherhithe follow close behind; they are less frequent in Walworth, though a cluster of beer-houses marks the poor area on either side of East Street. Off-licences for beer in jugs are rare, and so are grocers' licences. All through these districts there are complaints of much drinking; the amount of rough, heavy work connected with riverside employment, mills, warehouses and tanyards, partly accounting for the large demand for beer. The number of small public-houses in Bermondsey is complained of.

**Places of Amusement.**—Until late years South London was more known for its music-halls and variety stage than for theatres of the Strand type, their *clientèle* being chiefly local. The more famous of the halls are the 'Canterbury,' in Westminster Bridge Road, and the 'South London Palace' in London Road. The best-known theatres are the 'Surrey' in Blackfriars Road; the Elephant and Castle, New Kent Road; the new 'Kennington' Theatre, in the Kennington Road; and Terriss's Theatre, in Lower Road, Rotherhithe. Bermondsey has no theatre, but some music-halls, such as the 'Star,' in Abbey Street; and Walworth has a small music-hall near the Walworth Road Station. Entertainments are also given at the 'Horns' Assembly Rooms in Kennington, the Royal Victoria Hall in the Waterloo Road, and in Town Halls, notably those of Bermondsey and Rotherhithe, and there are friendly leads in public-houses. The market streets are the brightest and gayest resorts of an evening, especially the New Cut and Walworth Road, from East Street to Camberwell Gate.

**Open Spaces.**—The largest public open spaces are Vauxhall Park, Kennington Park, Archbishop's Park, Lambeth, and Southwark Park in Rotherhithe. More open spaces are badly needed in Lambeth, Southwark, Bermondsey and Walworth, where some churchyards and a few small spaces, such as Redcross Garden, and Little Dorrit's Playground, which now takes the place of one of the black patches off the Borough High Street, are among the few places available for children. A small clearing reserved as a playground off the north side of East Street was spoken of as one of the 'finest bits of work ever done by the London County Council.' The main roads are broad, and with the river, form the lungs of the greater part of the district. Rotherhithe, with its extensive docks and Southwark Park, stands in striking contrast to Southwark, Bermondsey and Walworth as regards air-space.

**Health.**—Almost the extreme of unhealthiness for London is reached in the district of St. George the Martyr in Southwark. The crowded central districts have the highest death-rates, the excessive crowding and want of playgrounds telling especially on child life. Health improves with distance from the centre and away from the river-bank. The ground lies low, undulating very slightly in Walworth and Lambeth. The river-banks are above high-water mark. The soil is of sand and gravel in Kennington, Walworth, and part of Bermondsey, but of clay north of Lambeth Bridge, running in a wide strip along the river-bank as far as Spa Road Station, where it broadens so as to include the whole of Rotherhithe.

**Changes of Population.**—The drift of population from ring to ring can be clearly seen in this map. The greater part of the poverty patches are to be found near the centre where site values are highest; the 'dark-blue' and 'black' classes disperse only upon the demolition of their dwellings. The colour lightens with distance from the river. Warehouses replace population in Southwark and Bermondsey; the poor are forced into Walworth and Camberwell, and in addition Lambeth has received some poor from Westminster. Southwark is moving to Walworth, Walworth to North Brixton and Stockwell, while the servant-keepers of outer South London go to Croydon and other places.

The rebuilding by the railway companies brings in a fairly comfortable class, either from outside or from the surrounding streets, as seen in the case of the buildings off Stangate Street in Lambeth: but the Guinness Buildings in Snow's Fields and Page's Walk, Bermondsey, succeed in partially rehousing a poor class. The very poor who are displaced by demolition in most cases refuse to live in 'models' owing to their inability to submit to the necessary measures of discipline.

**Means of Locomotion.**—Waterloo and London Bridge stations are termini for railway passengers and Blackfriars and Bricklayers' Arms for goods, within the map. The London and South Western railway serves the western; and the South Eastern and Chatham, the London and Brighton, and the East London lines, the centre and eastern sides of the districts under review; there are also the Waterloo and City and the South London Electric railways, the latter running from Clapham Common to Islington.

Of horse tramways there are a large number serving the main trunk roads: they give access from the South to London, Blackfriars, Waterloo and Westminster bridges. They are the most important of the means of communication in South London. These tramways are all slow and apt to be blocked by heavy traffic, but are very largely used: the less comfortable omnibus is able to maintain its place, owing to its greater ease in negotiating blocks. What is wanted is electric instead of horse

traction, which it may be hoped will soon be supplied, and through tramway communication between South and North London. At the present time Southwark Bridge, avoided by drivers because the gradients on either side are steep, is the only bridge which is sufficiently free of traffic to admit of tramlines being carried over it. It is conceivable that the City might be crossed by a system of sub-surface traction, and connection made above ground with the tram lines which start northwards from Finsbury Circus. Both South and North London would be greatly benefited if this were possible. At present, owing to want of facilities of communication, the northern parts of Lambeth, Southwark and Bermondsey lose a large part of the advantages which their central position as regards the rest of London might give them. Further South, Walworth is ill-provided with means of access; a line running from Southwark Bridge and bisecting the triangle lying between the Old Kent Road, Walworth Road and Peckham Road, and giving access thence to East Dulwich, would relieve a large area which is already full and tends to become congested.

## PLACES OF WORSHIP.

**List of Parish Churches** situated in the district described in Chapters I.—IV., with other PLACES OF WORSHIP grouped in their ecclesiastical parishes.

**All Hallows, Southwark.**
All Hallows' Miss., Union St.
Surrey Chapel (Prim. Meth.), Blackfriars Rd.
Shaftesbury Memorial Hall (L. C. M.), Union St.

***All Saints, Lambeth.**
*Cong. Ch., York Road.
Upton Miss. (Bapt.), 6, York Rd.

**All Saints, Rotherhithe.**
Southwark Pk. Wesl. Ch., Lower Rd.
U. Meth. Free Ch., Albion St.
Rotherhithe Free Ch., Lower Rd.
Salv. Army Barracks, Lower Rd.
St. Winifred's Miss., Lower Rd.
St. Winifred's Instit., Orange Pl.

**All Saints, Surrey Square.**
Prim. Meth. Miss., Kinglake St.
Mina Room (Breth.), Mina Rd.

**Charterhouse Mission, Crosby Row.**
Charterhouse Miss., Tabard St.
Wesl. Chapel, Chapel Place.
L. C. Miss. Room, Warren Pl.
Long Lane Miss., Crosby Row.
Meeting Room, Silvester St.

**Clare College Mission, Abbeyfield Rd.**

**Christchurch, Abbey Street.**
†St. Peter's Miss., Purbrook St.
Gedling St. Miss., Gedling St.
Bermondsey Ragged School, Gedling St.
Salv. Army Slum Post, Hickman's Folly.
Holy Trinity (R. C.), Dockhead.

**Christchurch, Blackfriars Rd.**
Bethel Bapt. Miss., Stamford St.
Wesl. Chapel, Stamford St.
Unitarian Chapel, Stamford St.
Working Men's Miss., Collingwood St.
Fegan's Home Miss., Holland St.

**Christchurch, Rotherhithe.**
Christchurch House, 47, Bermondsey Wall.
Prim. Meth. Chapel, Union Rd.
Ark Church, Paradise Street.
Seamen's Miss., Cathay Street.
Memorial Hall, Paradise St.
St. Joseph's (R. C.), Paradise St.

**Emmanuel, Lambeth.**
Emmanuel Mission, Tracey St.
Wesl. Miss., Topaz Street.

* Since the Inquiry was made, All Saints' parish has been combined with St. John the Evangelist and the church demolished. The Congregational Chapel has also been closed and has since been re-opened as All Saints' parish hall.
† Closed.

**Holy Trinity, Rotherhithe.**
Wesl. Ch., Silver Street.
Scandinavian Ch., Rotherhithe St.
Our Lady Immaculate Conception (R.C.), Rotherhithe St.
Seamen's Chapel, Derrick St.
British and Foreign Sailors' Miss. Room, Derrick St.

**Lady Margaret, Walworth.**
Wesl. Ch., Rodney Road.

**Pembroke Miss., Walworth.**
People's Hall, Townsend St.

**St. Agnes, Kennington Park.**
Cong. Miss., Lorrimore Road.
King's Own Miss., Royal Road.

**St. Alphege, Southwark.**
St. Alphege's Miss., Friar St.
L. C. Miss., Library Street.
L. C. Miss., 56, Friar Street.
Hope Mission, Friar Street.

**St. Andrew, Lambeth.**
St. Andrew's Parish Room, Roupell Street.
Salv. Army Slum Post, Cornwall Road.

**St. Andrew, Newington.**
St. Andrew's Miss., Theobold St.
Brunswick Ch. (Meth. New Con.), Gt. Dover St.
Welsh Calv. Meth. Ch., Falmouth Rd.

**St. Anne, Bermondsey.**
Bapt. Ch., Lynton Road.
Unitarian Chapel, Fort Rd.
Salv. Army Barr., St. James' Rd.

**St. Augustine, South Bermondsey.**
St. Augustine's Miss., 125, Drummond Rd.
Baptist Ch., Drummond Rd.
Southwark Pk. Presb. Ch., Southwark Pk. Rd.
Manor Chapel (U. Meth. Free), Galleywall Rd.
Camilla Room (Breth.), Camilla Rd.
L. C. Miss., Blue Anchor Lane.

**St. Barnabas, Rotherhithe.**
Southwark Park Cong. Ch., Lower Rd.
Cong. Ch., Maynard Road.
Bapt. Ch., Bush Road.
Brethren's Meeting Ho., Midway Place.

**St. Bartholomew, Rotherhithe New Rd.**
Bapt. Ch., Ilderton Road.
Salv. Army Hall, Verney Rd.

**St. Crispin, Bermondsey.**
St. Crispin's Miss., Cherry Garden St.
St. Stephen the Yeoman Ragged Sch., Marigold Pl.

**St. George the Martyr, Boro' High St.**
St. George's Miss., Bath St.
St. George's Miss., Chapel Crt.
Cong. Miss., Collier's Rents.
Bapt. Chapel, Borough Road.
*St. George's Presb. Ch., Borough Road.
†Peculiar People's Hall, Bath St.
South London Miss., Scovell Rd.
Farmhouse Miss., Harrow St.
Salv. Army Hall, 26, Newington Causeway.

**St. James, Bermondsey.**
Llewellyn Miss., New Church St.
St. James' Miss., Alexis St.
Cong. Ch., Jamaica Road.
Marlboro' Bapt. Ch., 77, Spa Rd.
Bapt. Ch., Abbey St.
Mildmay Miss. Ho., 97, New Church Rd.
Percy Hall, 172A, Abbey Street.
Bermondsey Christian Miss., Spa Road Station Rd.

**St. James, Kennington.**
Kennington Gospel Miss., White Hart Sq.

**St. John, Horselydown.**
St. John's Miss., Tooley Street.
St. John's Miss. Ho., Curlew St.

**St. John, Walworth.**
Bapt. Ch., Walworth Road.
New Surrey Tabernacle (Bapt.), Wansey St.
Victory Place Inst., Victory Pl.
Bedford Institute, Bedford St.

**St. John the Evangelist, Waterloo Road.**
Bible Christian Ch., Waterloo Rd.
L. C. Miss., Cage Place.

* Now closed (1902).

† Removed to Garden Row (1902).

**St. Jude, Southwark.**
Peculiar People, 3, Garden Row.

**St. Katharine, Rotherhithe.**
L. C. Miss., 2, Cornbury Rd.
Mission Room, 68, Cornbury Rd.

**St. Luke, Grange Road.**
St. Luke's Miss., Alfred Street.
Cong. Ch., Rouel Road.
Prim. Meth. Chapel, Upper Grange Rd.

**St. Mark, Camberwell.**
Girls' Sch. Miss., Longcroft Rd.
Girls' Sch. Miss., Sandover Rd.
Maze Pond Bapt. Ch., Old Kent Rd.
Wesl. Ch., Oakley Place.

**St. Mark, Walworth.**
St. Mark's Paroch. Hall, York St.
Browning Hall (Cong.), York St.
Bapt. Ch., East St.
Prim. Meth. Chapel, East St.
L. C. Miss., Townley Street.
South London Cabdrivers' Miss., 213, Walworth Road.
Working Men's Miss., York St.
Ch. of English Martyrs (R. C.), Rodney Rd.

**St. Mary, Lambeth.**
St. Mary's Miss., Lambeth Walk.
Christ Ch., Westminster Br. Rd.
Christ Ch. Lads' Inst., North St.
Wesl. Chapel, Lambeth Road.
Presb. Ch., Kennington Road.
Salv. Ar. Slum Post, 27, Broad St.

**St. Mary, Newington.**
St. Gabriel, Newington Butts.
Metropolitan Tabernacle (Bapt.), Newington Butts.
Meth. New Conn. Miss., Walworth Rd.
Boro. New Synag., Heygate St.

**St. Mary, Rotherhithe.**
St. Paul's Ch., St. Paul's Place.

**St. Mary the Less, Lambeth.**
*St. Anselm, Kennington Cross.
Moffatt Inst. (Cong.), Esher St.
Regent Ch. (Bapt.), Ethelred St.
Lambeth Walk Miss. (L.C.M.), Lambeth Walk.

**St. Mary Magdalene, Bermondsey.**
St. Andrew's Miss., Abbey St.
Grigg's Pl. Miss., Grange Walk.
St. Peter's Miss., Purbrook St.
Great Central Hall (Wesl.), Bermondsey New Rd.
Wesl. Miss., Leroy St
Salv. Army Slum Post, Bermondsey St.
Grange Miss., 47, The Grange.
Work. Men's Miss., Decima St.
L. C. Miss., Abbey Street.

**St. Mary Magdalene, Old Kent Rd.**
Pilgrim Fathers Cong. Ch., New Kent Rd.
Haddon Hall (Bapt.), Bermondsey New Rd.
Surrey Square Bapt. Mission.
St. George's Hall (Prim. Meth.), Old Kent Rd.

**St. Matthew, New Kent Rd.**
Murphy Memorial Cong. Ch., New Kent Rd.
Almshouse Chapel (Bapt.), Station Rd.

**St. Michael, Lant Street.**
Welsh Cong. Ch., Southwark Bridge Rd.
King's Court Mis., Gt. Suffolk St.

**St. Olave, Southwark.**
Melior Street Miss., Melior St.
Our Lady of La Salette (R. C.), Melior St.

**St. Paul, Bermondsey.**
St. Paul's Miss., 200, Long Lane.
L. C. Mission, 118, Weston St.
Arthur's Mission, Snowsfields.

**St. Paul, Walworth.**
St. Alban's Ch., Manor Place.
St. Paul's Miss., Lorrimore St.
Surrey Gardens Memorial Hall, Penrose St.
Alexander Institute, Carter St.

**St. Paul, Westminster Br. Rd.**
Upton Bapt. Ch., Lambeth Rd.
Bible Christian Miss. Room, Quinn Sq.
Jurston Hall, Gerridge Street.
L. C. Miss. Hall, Webber St.
St. George's (R. C.), St. George's Road.

**St. Peter, Southwark.**
†L. C. Miss. Hall, Park St.

* Constituted a parish in August 1901.

† Closed (1902).

**St. Peter, Vauxhall.**
Caine Hall (Cong.), Vauxhall St.
Vauxhall Bapt. Ch., Upper Kennington Lane.
Wesl. Chapel, Vauxhall Walk.

**St. Peter, Walworth.**
Sutherland Cong. Ch., Walworth Rd.
Mission Hall, Horsley Street.

**St. Philip, Camberwell.**
Marlboro' Cong. Ch., Old Kent Rd.
Prim. Meth. Miss., St. James' Rd.

**St. Philip, Kennington Rd.**
St. Philip's Miss., Walcot Sq.

**St. Saviour, Southwark.**
St. Saviour's Miss., 41, Union St.
Ch. of the Most Precious Blood (R. C.), Worcester St.
Grove Miss. (Wesl.), Gt. Guildford St.
L. C. Miss., 9, Park Street.

**St. Stephen, Southwark.**
*Christian Community Hall, 179, Tabard St.
Ragged School, Lansdowne Pl.
Kent St. Ragged School, Amicable Row.

**St. Stephen, Walworth.**

**St. Thomas, Lambeth.**
St. Thomas' Hall, 174, Waterloo Rd.
St. Thomas' Miss., Frazier St.
*St. Thomas' Miss., Short St.
Upton Bapt. Miss., Oakley St.
*Wesl. Miss., 33, New Cut.
Gospel Hall, 15, New Cut.
Royal Victoria Hall, Waterloo Rd.
Lambeth Med. Mis., Oakley St.
L. C. Miss., 128, Westminster Bridge Rd.

**Trinity, Lambeth.**
*Trinity Mission, Felix Street.

**Trinity, Newington.**
Shaftesbury Hall (Christian Community), Trinity St.
Lambeth and Southwark Miss., Trinity St.
Salv. Army Barracks, 61, New Kent Rd.

* Now closed (1902).

THE TOWER
Ex. Par.
ST PAUL
Dock Str.
ST GEORGE IN THE EAST
ST JOHN
Wapping
ST JOHN
Horsleydown
ST OLAVE
Southwark
ST SAVIOUR
Southwark
ST THOMAS
CHRIST CHURCH
ST PETER
ST ANDREW
ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST
ALL HALLOWS
ST MICHAEL
ST THOMAS
ST ALPHEGE
ST PAUL
HOLY TRINITY
WESTMINSTER
BRIDGE
ST GEORGE
THE MARTYR
Southwark
CHARTERHOUSE
MISSION
ST PAUL
HOLY TRINITY
ST STEPHEN
ST MARY MAGDALENE
Bermondsey
CHRIST CHURCH
ST MARY
Rotherhithe
CHRIST CHURCH
ST CRISPIN
ST JAMES
Ex. Par.
ST JUDE
ST MARY
Lambeth
ST ANDREW
ST MATTHEW
ALL SAINTS
ST LUKE
Grange Road
EMMANUEL
ST PHILIP
Kennington
ST MARY MAGDALENE
Kent Road
THE LADY MARGARET
Walworth
ST JOHN
Walworth
ST AUGUSTINE
S. Bermondsey
ST BARNAB
CLARE COLLEGE
MISSION
ST MARY THE LESS
PEMBROKE
MISSION
ST MARY
Newington
ST ANNE
ST MARK
East Str. Walworth
ST PETER
Vauxhall
ST ANSELM
Kennington Cross
ST JAMES
Kennington
WELLINGTON
MISSION
ALL SAINTS
Surrey Square
ST RATHERINE
ST PETER
Walworth
ST PHILIP
Avondale Square
ST PAUL
Lorrimore Squ.
ST STEPHEN
ST BARTHOLOMEW
GIRLS
SCHOOL
MISSION
ST ANNE
Vauxhall
ST MARK
Kennington
ST AGNES
Kennington Park
ALL SOULS
Grosvenor Park
ST MARK
ST GEORGE
CORPUS
CHRISTI
MISSION

# CHAPTER V

## ILLUSTRATIONS

In the Spring of 1900, I visited a large number of the churches and chapels in this district, and the four sections that follow contain extracts from notes made at the time. I take this occasion to renew my warning that these and the other extracts given in the following chapters must be regarded as illustrations only, not as in themselves a sufficient basis for any conclusions.

### § 1

*St. Saviour's.*—One descends from the street to the old level on which the church stands, and the entrance is far away to the west. In the interior the impression is quite that of a cathedral: sightseers wandering about while morning prayer went on in the Lady Chapel; and the interest of the sightseers duly considered by the labelling of points of interest—as 'Norman Doorway,' 'Norman Recess,' &c. At the same time attention is called to projected improvements—painted glass it is desired to insert of which the design is exhibited in order to attract gifts. The Sunday morning congregation in the Lady Chapel consisted mainly of school children.

*St. Olave's* is a stately old-fashioned Georgian building, with great fluted columns carrying roof and galleries. It is fitted with pews even in the galleries. Below they

are very high, and some are of the old-fashioned square pattern. The centre aisle is wide and was set out with benches. It was a chilly Sunday morning in February, and no one yet had come. The gas was burning to warm the air. Later, I found a congregation of six adults, with some charity children, seated in the aisle.

*Roman Catholic Church of the Most Precious Blood.*—A bare, undecorated building, walls left rough inside, colour-washed with a painted dado for the sake of cleanliness. For early Mass there were present about one hundred adults and the school children—quite poor people, and, as is often the case with the Catholics, there were others in the street and hanging about the door who evidently belonged to the congregation. In the evening the adult attendance was again about one hundred. The congregation made the responses very well. This bare church, with curious canopied altar, produces a very striking effect.

*All Hallows*, which I also visited, is no less remarkable, and much larger, a really grandly proportioned church, also in the bare style. It makes no show outside, and one may walk all round it before finding the door. It was quite empty, the morning service not having begun, and looked exactly like a Roman Catholic place of worship, even to the figure of a minor kind of priest or brother, in cassock and biretta, seated in a corner reading out of a red-letter breviary. In one part of the church is a great Calvary set upon rocks, and in front space for kneeling in private prayer. In the central aisle a man was slowly pulling the rope of the bell and the school children began to come in, shepherded by the Sisters in their nun-like garb. A good many other worshippers followed. The service is announced as 'a solemn Mass with sermon: 11.15.' In the evening there was a fair gathering, mainly young people and children, who seemed to belong to the church. There is a bookcase near the door, and it is the custom for those who come to take from it their prayer and hymn books and to return them to the shelves on going out. A Sister was present, but not in charge. All seemed to reflect a loving familiarity with the church, making of it a religious home.

At *St. Michael's* on Sunday morning there were ten to

fifteen adults and thirty to forty children, besides the choir. In the evening the little church was fairly filled. The vicar preached, and all he said was simple and to the point. The morning lesson had told of Adam's fall, and he read it again 'because so few could come—that is, get out of bed soon enough—to come to morning service.' The Bible story, he said, might be taken as of a particular man or as of human nature generally, and in speaking of temptation and sin he always used the pronoun 'we.' He took for his text God's searching words, 'Where art thou, Adam?' as addressed to every one of us. We are all Adams and Eves. We have some knowledge and want other things—we all disobey and all fall, and should not blame Adam for it.

*St. Alphege*, with a darkened church and a great suspended Christ on the cross, produces a very beautiful effect, and the air was filled with incense. In the morning some adults were there and a large number of school children. The regular evening service was abandoned, and in place of it there was to be a procession at 8.15. I saw it start in a drizzling rain. It consisted of a small body of choir and clergy all in white surplices, getting very wet and limp, escorted by men bearing lanterns of a mediæval type hanging from short poles. They gathered in the street, made a false start with a hymn, stopped, started again, and I saw them wend their way watched by eight or ten of the populace. Within the church there was a small weather-bound congregation who, awaiting the return of the procession, were encouraged to occupy the time by singing hymns. If the weather had been fine all would have been in the street no doubt, and many others would have enjoyed the show.

*Charterhouse Mission* is a very singular building. Entering by steps leading down into a basement, a visitor finds himself in a striking and lofty church, divided into three parts by columns supporting arches and a flat roof, the latter forming the floor of the club rooms above. In the church hang sacred pictures and a crucifix and there is an altar bearing candles and decked with embroidery. At the morning service there were school children and young persons, male

and female, all behaving well, and the priest in his robes attended by acolytes and choristers. In the evening the numbers were larger. The sermon was preached by a stranger who, when he had done his part, rushed off to catch his train while the congregation sang a hymn and the collection was taken up. We then sang another hymn as the procession wound slowly round the church, the priest in splendid robes, out of which he quickly slipped in order to bid us each good night at the door. The stranger's sermon was noteworthy and attentively listened to, though the interest was hardly sufficient to stop coughing. It was on the power of the will of man to defeat God's purpose, leading up to the scheme of salvation; and laid stress on the part played in this by the Virgin Mary, and our consequent adoration of her. She was set up as an example of complete submission to the will of God. As Christ was the new Adam, so she was the new Eve, and the hymn we sang was addressed to B. V. Mary, the Mother of God.

*The Working Men's Mission.*—When I reached the place, a religious procession was approaching with lights and music. The missionary led, followed by the band, a few other men, some women and some children, about thirty in all. Halting at the chapel door they doused their flaring lights and entered the building, inviting strangers in, but I was the only one who entered with them. There were some other people already inside, and with an audience of perhaps sixty the square room was about one-fourth filled. The missionary was supported on thè platform by two other men, and by his son, who not only played the harmonium and sang a solo, but also preached the sermon. The father, a seemingly illiterate man, with hardly an H in his vocabulary, told us how pleased he should himself be to listen to his son, and hoped that the words might be blessed. He spoke, too, of other members of his family, mentioning three of his children who had given themselves to Christ's work, and asked our prayers for his wife who was ill and in suffering.

The young man began by saying that he had studied the Bible all the week without being able to find an

inspiration, but that while he sat there one had come to him; he however admitted (very candidly) that it was a subject on which he had spoken before, and he evidently had it by him to use, failing any other inspiration. It was on Pilate's words 'Behold the man,' and was perhaps the reflection of some sermon he had heard. He described first Pilate and his position and cowardice, then the people Pilate addressed and the aims of their leaders, and lastly the Man who stood there. It was the scheme of a great oratorical effect—without the orator.

*The Roman Catholic Church of St. Joseph* (*Bermondsey*) was quite full on Sunday morning with school children and adults. Every seat was occupied and a crowd standing behind. When I entered it was that period of the Mass when, the principal priest being busied at the altar, the kneeling congregation sing in a subdued tone, with very devotional effect. Meanwhile another priest, a big man, took the opportunity of walking up and down the centre aisle, looking right and left as, with book in hand, he appeared to tick off those who were present or absent. In the evening there was a fair, but much smaller congregation, all adults. A young priest was reading the lesson. It was, I noticed, the same portion of the Gospel that is appointed to be read in the Church of England service of the day.

*Holy Trinity* (*R. C.*), *Dockhead*.—It was 10.30; I suppose there would be High Mass at 11. Meanwhile the church was largely filled with children who were being specially addressed. They occupied the front and centre, adults sitting at the sides and behind, and many, both adults and children, were standing at the back waiting to take their seats. The priest stood at the altar-rail, and talked to the children at his feet in an easy familiar style. He referred to the Blessed Virgin chosen of God for her high office and of her naturally great influence in heaven, with great simplicity, and passed on to St. Joseph who had been selected as foster father and who, working for his living as a carpenter, had supported both Mary and her son; doing thus his duty; and he referred also to the influence that St. Joseph could not but have gained.

And then he turned his discourse to the practical lesson for his hearers, most of whom would have to earn their bread with their hands, that honest work would be approved of God.

In the evening this church was crowded to the doors (Sunday, 13th May, 1900). I do not know what the occasion may have been, but a sacred procession passed round the aisles to the intense delight of a church full of poor people and children on their knees. In the procession were seventy or eighty girls of all ages veiled in white muslin. Some were quite little things, and these, walking backwards, strewed flowers in front of the priest, who carried the host under a canopy. The canopy was held by four rough-looking men. I watched the people as they left the church. They seemed to be there by families and were of all classes found in Bermondsey, but especially the poor. They looked well fed—better fed than dressed—a characteristic with the Roman Catholic poor.

From this scene I went to Mr. Davis's railway arch mission. The service there is put late. The building was full, with perhaps two hundred and fifty, all adults, and mostly working or lower middle class, and some seemingly quite poor. They were appealed to as those whose duty it was to spread the Gospel and to help in every way those not so well off as themselves. The appeal as regards money is doubtless ultimately to the rich, and the funds are raised from the West End, but those who attend also give. The address began at 8.35, and when nine struck some began to slip out, so the preacher hurried to a conclusion, and the final hymn was sung in the confusion of a general break up of the party. There is much that is rough and little that is reverent about such services, but they are homely and the people find satisfaction in them, counting themselves as servants of Christ, doing God's work on earth and hastening the coming of His kingdom.

The junction of Bermondsey New Road and the Old Kent Road is a very favourite pitch for out-door services, and probably its occupation at stated times by certain bodies is understood. When I reached the spot one Sunday morning the Salvationists were there: a group

of about twelve men, women, and boys, with musical instruments. The speaker, an earnest, pallid man, with a very harsh voice, was declaiming our need of salvation before we die. He was more forcible and real and less conventional in what he said than usual; but had no outside audience. At the Grange Road end of the street was another Salvation Army meeting, still smaller, conducted by women speaking with low voices; quite as effective, perhaps, as the other, or at least not less so. The people in the street were marketing—the idlers were not yet out in any numbers.

The Haddon Hall Baptists followed the Salvationists on the first pitch, which they held till 1 o'clock, carrying on a regular service, with harmonium, at the same time as that in their hall close by. They had brought a party of their school children to sing in the street, and at the end, after 12.30, there was a considerable gathering round them, but at that time the street swarmed with idlers and those bound homewards from other services. Earlier, they spoke and sang to the air.

## § 2

*South East London Mission* (Primitive Methodist).—The Sunday morning service was attended by about a hundred adults and perhaps as many children, including those from the Sunday school. There was also a choir of about fifteen, and the singing was hearty and good. The acoustic properties of the hall are admirable; even through the roar of the traffic, before the outer doors were shut, one could hear every word spoken. After the usual hymns and prayers we had a remarkable sermon on the Pentecostal gift. In the lesson we had read of Christ's ascent into heaven, and of the return of the little army of His followers to the room in which they had been accustomed to meet and to their usual avocations, to await the fulfilment of the promise—the coming of the Holy Ghost. In his sermon the minister

spoke of the time for prayer and the time for waiting; and the calm certitude that came to accepted prayer; told of George Muller with the thousands of children who depended on him for their food, and of how he would rise from his knees and go to bed in the assurance that his prayer was answered, and that the money needed would come. He referred also to his own experience in this very vestry, of his need and prayer for £100, and of his having nothing more to do but break the seal of the envelope that brought the money. Proceeding, he spoke of the coming of the Spirit upon us in these days and of the experiences of the soul that transcended all argument. He knew that Christ had risen; he knew that the promised presence of the Holy Ghost had been fulfilled. He alluded to recent meetings he had attended at Manchester and elsewhere, when the Spirit was with them in power to the salvation of many souls, and he prayed it might happen here to-day. Why should it not?

But the occasion it seemed was not propitious; and no one was stirred in spite of great efforts to excite emotion. After the sermon a hymn of rousing character was sung in the middle of which the minister intervened, breaking in at the most telling verse; which at his bidding we sang again and again, the minister leading with outspread arms.

Those present were mixed lower middle and working class, just a grade above the Baptists at Haddon Hall.

In the afternoon for the P. S. A. service there were about the same number, or perhaps rather more adults, but not many children, and the middle-class element seemed to be in the ascendant. The working people sat at the back. For the morning the seats are allotted and reserved, in the afternoon all are free. I assumed (and the minister likewise) that all were regular church-going people. He read them the story of Martha and Mary, when Martha was cumbered with much serving, and afterwards, in referring to it in his address, said he supposed we all knew our Bibles and from whence the passage came. We ought, he said, so to know our Bibles that whatever might be read, we could say at once in what book and in what chapter it was to be found—

and this in addressing a meeting aimed at those who are outside the fold! The service was preceded by a performance on stringed instruments, besides which several pieces were played by the band, and solos sung by a lady. The music and songs were well given, and the whole service, though of no importance as a popular religious movement, formed a very agreeable and suitable way of spending Sunday afternoon.

In the address the minister described the scene at Bethany: the worn and tired Christ, the dusty sandalled feet, the refreshing water and the simple meal—the cup of tea, 'if they drank tea in Palestine then.' All told in a slow, deliberate way with exquisite voice. Then he passed on to the other great incident at Bethany: the resurrection of Lazarus, remarking how the words then used—'I am the Resurrection and the Life'—were repeated now by every grave-side. Next he spoke of the scene with the woman of Samaria, 'a person of no character at all,' from whom the hospitality of a glass of water was asked. We are told, he said, that we must not preach high doctrine to the people. But Christ did; to Martha and Mary and now to this woman, speaking words destined to revolutionize religious ideas and break down every barrier:—'The time is coming and now is;' 'God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth'—and he read the whole of that beautiful passage.

Prior to the evening service there was, as usual, an outdoor gathering on the opposite side of the street, itself preceded by a prayer-meeting in the vestry to 'get the ammunition ready,' said the committee man, borrowing a phrase from the Salvation Army. The outdoor office is a hapless little exercise attracting only a few children. The brass band also marches through the streets and came up in full strength to play a last tune outside before entering the hall. The congregation was similar in character to that of the morning and afternoon, but more numerous and more distinctly middle class, reinforced doubtless by people who attend regularly at other chapels in the morning. There may have been two hundred or two hundred and fifty present. The choir was the same as in the morning. The service was followed

by the Lord's Supper, but the numbers who stayed for this were small.

The missioner again conducted the service, preaching for the third time, and his sermon was on the sacrifices of Cain and Abel and the reasons why Cain's offering was not accepted. The soft sweet voice and quiet manner were now replaced by loud stern tones and powerful action, as the preacher denounced the attempt to evade the realities of life and sin and judgment by altars decked with flowers. Rough stones piled; fire and smoke; the blood of the cherished firstling of the flock: such was the acceptable sacrifice to appease God and set right that which was wrong, distorted throughout Nature by man's sin and fall. It was characteristic of his method that he described the altars to us as standing side by side, not twenty feet apart — we were made to realize them by his action—on this side and that: and between them a cleavage; a gulf; which to this day divides all human life. It was a great climax of eloquence, but again he did not seem to carry his audience with him. It may be that he is too many sided. The exaltation of his belief may move some, his scriptural exposition and eloquence, or his uncompromising sternness, others; some may be attracted by the vein of radical violence that crops up at times in what this man says, others stirred by his inexhaustible energy, or brought into line by the self-advertisement from which he never shrinks for the cause he has at heart. But to pull all these strings, to sound all these notes harmoniously, is difficult; is perhaps an impossible combination.

The *Manor Church*, of the United Free Methodists, is also run on enterprising lines. It is a commodious building, bright and comfortable-looking, but without any attempt at beauty. Behind it are large schools, which in the afternoon were quite full of children. I was not present in the morning, but attended the men's service in the afternoon. There was then no one in the galleries, but in the body of the church were about sixty men and on the platform twelve others, including three musicians and the minister. The minister pre-

sided, seated at a table, and over his head in the pulpit was the lady soloist. The audience were, for the most part, of the serious working man type with some of lower middle class. The lady's songs were loudly clapped, and so was any sentiment in the address that called for it, but the forms of a religious service were on the whole observed. The minister prayed; a lesson from the Bible was read—very badly—by one of those on the platform; the men all knew the hymns and could sing; but the address did not profess to be religious at all. It was, however, contentious, being on the drink question, attacking those whose extreme views blocked the way of attainable reform. They had done so in Gladstone's time and would do so now if they refused to advocate the acceptance of the proposals in the minority report of Lord Peel's Commission. At the end a man rose to ask a question, but this was ruled out of order, with the result that after the meeting the aggrieved one boiled over with indignation on the side walk. But a vote which had been taken showed only three hands held up against the sense of the address.

The men at this meeting are no doubt religious persons, but is this a religious exercise? Those present seemed, however, to form an inner circle of the congregation, a little brotherhood in its way. They were proposing to spend Whitsuntide together in some manner not yet fixed: some excursion or walk would be arranged, and announced next Sunday. The leader spoke to them upon how to appear more effective at their meetings in the church, recommending them not to scatter, but to sit close up; and as regards open-air preaching he alluded (quite among themselves) to the wiliness needed to attract the public-house loafer, or the ordinary passer by; advising that they should form a solid ring, not too large, and should excite curiosity, such as by putting a girl in the middle, not standing on anything which should raise her into view; and then letting her sing. The men would want to see her and would come up to the ring; or other girls would push in, and the men would follow the girls, they always did—(great laughter),—or, on some other plan, I forget what, the girls would follow the men, they always did—(still more laughter).

This class of joke is the staple of the 'brightness' introduced into P.S.A. and 'men's own' services generally, except in the Church of England, and even there the great advocate of the movement sometimes sinks to them.

In the evening their leader, though still dressed in a grey suit of roundabout cut, is the minister of a church. He advertises widely the subjects of his Sunday evening discourses, which he entitles 'Talks to Toilers.' It was the last Sunday in the month, and on that Sunday the address is always 'To those in doubt: being simple straightforward proofs of Christian facts.' It is described as a service that all can enjoy, with fine choir, organ and orchestra, and hearty singing. The church was practically full of what may be called a popular audience, more lower middle than working class, but consisting of both, and forming, I should suppose, a real congregation of those who come regularly to the church. The service is attractive: the whole tone highly religious. Their minister has a gift of plain direct language both in his prayers and in his sermon, a certain fearlessness and sureness of himself and of his audience. He dealt with the resurrection of the dead, making the best of the usual misleading analogies from the animal and vegetable kingdoms. It was not the strength of his arguments, but the simple direct way he put them that made his sermon effective.

*John Street Hall,* of the Wesleyan Mission, is a very dreary and desolate looking place, and on Sunday morning was tenanted by only a handful of children. In the evening I was too late for the regular service, but joined an after prayer-meeting, when ten or fifteen people were present. The service was conducted with the direct aim of saving the soul of a certain young woman. This poor creature was prayed for and at, and moving hymns were sung and great efforts made to create the spiritual atmosphere needed to bring about the desired result. It was to me all very dreadful, and perhaps on my part it was monstrous to study the process in cold blood, for I was moved only to horror. On all hands the enthusiasm seemed very forced, hardly real except in a few of the kneeling women, one of whom poured forth a long almost inaudible prayer—not real at all it seemed to

me with any of the men, of whom there were three. There was one who practically conducted the proceedings, praying loudly and at length, suggesting and leading the hymns and generally pushing things on, and there was the brother who actually had the young woman in hand. This brother knelt beside her and from time to time spoke to her, and then would report progress aloud: 'Our sister is very near conversion—thank God,' and so on—these remarks being responded to by ejaculations from others present. The young woman herself was not kneeling, but sat rather stolidly, I thought. However, when the man considered that the time had come, he left her and sent two women, who sat on either side of her, and finally led her off between them (like tame elephants a wild one) to the inquiry room, and then this strange service was soon brought to an end. The third man, who nominally presided, sat at a desk on the platform and said nothing, except that once, when the leader had appealed to those present for aid in prayer and no one responded, it became the president's duty to step into the breach, which he did in a rather formal way. I do not think he liked any part of the affair.

After this, on my homeward journey, I was thankful for the altogether different aspect of religion exhibited at an outdoor service given by the Church of the Pilgrim Fathers. Noticing a crowd of people singing from the words thrown on the sheet, I joined it—a well-pleased, well-dressed assembly, easily gathered from the thousands walking past this lovely May evening. Many might be coming, like myself, from other services, others out on Sunday pleasuring, but liking to make out the hymns and join the swell of voices in the open air.

## § 3

*St. Matthew's*, New Kent Road, is a Gothic church with side aisles and light iron columns carrying a high-pitched roof; an attractive building. There was in it in the morning, a fairly large congregation. In the evening a cantata was given, the proceedings being like those at a concert. The conductor, with his baton, stood on a stool at the head of the centre aisle, facing his orchestra. The audience was hardly as good as the music deserved, but the church, which is large, was half filled.

At the *Lady Margaret Mission* there was good preaching in the morning to about forty adults, a few children, and a full body of choir and clergy. In the evening I found a very considerable gathering of young people of both sexes. All seemed of working class and many quite poor. The music was exquisite and the congregation sang with the choir in chorus. At the end of the service the priest, who had stood facing the altar, turned round and gave the benediction, and then the clergy filed out, preceded by the crucifix carried high, while the congregation, rough though they might be, remained kneeling in silence and the organ played a voluntary. This solemn ending is one of the best points of a High Church service.

The *Wellington Mission* buildings consist of a pretty Gothic chapel and a large hall for secular uses chiefly, but in which afternoon services for working men are held. A Lenten series on the 'ordinary man's' sins was announced. The evening service at the chapel was like that of some monastic brotherhood. In addition to the brothers and their choir, it was attended by only some thirty or forty, and they were mostly children. No surplices were worn, and when I entered the leading Brother, dressed in a gown of black stuff, hardly to be called a cassock, was kneeling at the head of the centre aisle, facing the altar, and lifting his hands and voice in prayer, whilst all present knelt devoutly. Later we sang and he turned round to us—a strange shabby figure, looking something more than an imitation of Rome.

At *Locksfields Wesleyan Chapel*, on Sunday evening, April 1st, the subject of the discourse, to suit the day, was 'Playing the fool,' and the text was Saul's outburst against himself as to his relations with David. The story of Saul and David was told vigorously and racily; the preacher suiting his hearers to perfection. He had a large audience of working-class people. The body and galleries of the building were practically full, if not exactly crowded, and the last comers had to have seats found for them by closer packing. The building is arranged on the usual Wesleyan plan, with a large orchestra gallery behind the minister, whose place is in the centre of the platform—not in a pulpit. There was a string band and an evident endeavour to make the music a feature, but excepting that the leader himself sang well, the effort was not very successful. Solos were also rendered by a lady. This church succeeds in catering for the people's tastes, and has obtained a genuine working-class congregation.

At *Christ Church* (Mr. Meyer's church in Westminster Bridge Road) a whole week's mission was announced, and on Sunday the special service began at 8 o'clock. I did not reach the church till 8.30. I found it fairly filled with a rather youthful congregation, still listening to the missioner who had addressed them, and who now, with quiet unimpassioned voice, appealed to those whose hearts were touched to confess Jesus. It was a striking scene: the man in the pulpit raising his hand, but hardly his voice, and pausing to listen for the low replies, 'I trust in Jesus,' which came from here and there. Each one stood up in his or her place to say the words, or perhaps only stood up and said nothing, but caught the preacher's eye, who for each one thanked God. By and by he invited those who had made confession, and any others who might desire to inquire further, to meet him in one of the galleries. Then came a hymn, during which the movement took place, all others being adjured to remain in their places till the hymn was over and they received the benediction, that there might be no confusion.

Nothing could be quieter or more orderly, there was no apparent excitement; yet the movement was catching; the impulse to say the words was strong.

The men's P. S. A. at Christ Church is very noteworthy, and April 28th, 1901, was a noteworthy occasion, being the first Sunday after Mr. Meyer's return from a visit to America. He spoke of his experiences there; of Chicago and the slaughter-houses, of the West and liberty, of the South and the negro question, of the East and trading combines and trusts, which 'do not bode well,' but would be 'broken on the selfishness by which they are formed.' But, finally, he brought his mind back to London, and his concluding remarks were an appeal to the men before him to range themselves on his and on God's side; to give up the drink, to declare for righteousness and purity. Then, what could they not do for London? Through them could be reached many a ward, many a street, many a court, many a home, many a workshop, many a family. Mr. Meyer is never afraid of using a personal note, and when he referred to his hopes, his determination and his claims on them, the men liked it and applauded, and for the moment at least felt themselves to be on his side, moved by the same zeal.

At the close of the service Mr. Meyer went to the door and shook hands with as many as possible. 'To shake hands with him means a lot to them,' we were told.

I did not reach *Spurgeon's Tabernacle* on Sunday morning till the congregation was leaving. I slipped past them and found myself in the huge basement that was then being used pending the completion of the building above. It had been full, or nearly so. In the evening it was again the last place visited, and I came upon the Communion Service, the plan of which was to me a revelation, though probably usual among the Baptists. The great basement room was three parts full. There were in it hundreds of people, all, when I entered, seated in dead silence. Before us, in a sort of alcove brilliantly lighted (no doubt an arrangement of the platform), there was a long table set out as one sees the Last Supper pourtrayed at Milan or elsewhere, with no one on the near side of the table, the Saviour in the centre and the apostles right and left. At the table before us Mr. Spurgeon occupied the central position; the others were, I suppose, his deacons. In front,

between the table and the railing, a frock-coated man moved about deftly adjusting plates and handing bread. Then Mr. Spurgeon rose, and all present rose with him, and, after breaking the bread, spoke the accustomed words: 'This is my body——.' Then from the back of the platform, where they had been seated, there stepped forward some twenty or perhaps thirty men, to whom were given silver plates containing little cubes of bread, and with these they moved down among the congregation and gave to each member of the Church. They evidently knew the members, and omitted those not in membership; and there were many children present, who were of course passed over. The pastor and deacons partook first, and those who served the congregation partook last. It was the same with the wine. Again all were seated, and again rose, the pastor taking the cup and speaking the chosen words, whilst those who served went with the cups among the congregation. The wine was passed, as the bread had been, from hand to hand till all had drunk, and once more the servers returned to the table. Lastly, they brought round the collection plates in the same way, and these, too, were handed only to the members. When this was all done, and partly, too, during it, prayer was offered and a hymn sung. There is no organ, and the voices swelled up from the congregation. Finally, Mr. Spurgeon spoke of the approaching opening of the Tabernacle, and of the money still to be raised to start free of debt, and made his jokes. It was a marvellous scene—a strange incongruous medley of simplicity and ceremonial.

## § 4

I spent a Saturday evening and Sunday morning in the neighbourhood of Bermondsey New Road, and am confirmed in my opinion that this is the poorest bit of London; but the market is becoming more important, people come to it from greater distances, and it is also true that this district, great as is its poverty, has money to spend. The stalls and shops that line the streets were extremely busy from 6 o'clock till midnight on Saturday, and busy again with a poorer class of customer on Sunday morning. The buyers on Saturday included many poor figures, but the majority looked hearty and happy enough. It was more in traversing the streets and penetrating the courts that I saw signs of drink, of sickness, and of starvation. The butchers were selling good pieces of meat freely, the greengrocers doing an active trade in new potatoes (it was June 2nd), and in green gooseberries and green peas, as well as cabbage and rhubarb. Many who had bought lamb bought mint. Girls crowded round the stall of summer hats and artificial flowers, picking out what they fancied—'Sixpence-halfpenny and twopence, eight and a-half the lot,' remains in my mind as the summing up of a bargain for a white chip hat and some white tulle with which to trim it—but most of the girls bought artificial flowers, and were extremely particular about shades of colour. Opposite was the usual scene of the sale of second-hand female underclothing, the surrounding crowd consisting of the poorest middle-aged women—mothers. It is an almost silent trade, for not a word passes beyond the naming of the price. The garment is sold or not sold, and if not sold goes back on to the rising heap and another is held up to view. This may be seen in Chapel Street, Islington, also, where too there is a very poor population, and in some other parts. The boot shops are a remarkable sight. It takes time to buy boots: you have to try them on; and the customers wait their turn, seated in rows, till served. It takes money, too. I did not see so much of renovated boot selling. Shops selling women's clothes were also crowded with those waiting to be served. Nor did the purchasers seem to be of poorer

class as the night grew on, except that there was the usual sight of the buying of cooked food.

The public-houses were everywhere crammed. Women turned in with their purchases to drink a glass of beer, sometimes leading a child, sometimes in social parties, sometimes alone. Amongst the women there was nothing to be called intoxication ; nor with the men to any extent, but I did not stay till closing time. What little I saw was as I was leaving—a man staggering along Old Kent Road and some rather gay dancing on the side walk. In Abbey Street the barbers' shops showed great activity. It is remarkable that, except at the cookshops, where slices of pork or pudding are sold to be carried home in paper, there are here no places where anything to eat can be had. Such coffee-shops as there are had closed for the night. Supper is not what these shops aim to supply. That service is taken up by the stall on wheels, which has its accustomed pitch, and remains available till the small hours, and by it is done very well. Coffee, tea, hard-boiled eggs, bread and butter, cake; all quite good; fully as good as at the coffee-shops; but to be eaten hastily, standing.

On Sunday morning the stamp of poverty is over all. The quantity of old clothes and old boots exceeds anything elsewhere. The butchers are selling the last of their meat, but at 1 o'clock the world of local fashion turns out, and the streets are crowded.

# CHAPTER VI

# ILLUSTRATIONS

## § 1

### MISSIONS AND MISSIONARIES

(1) *With the Missionaries.*

. . . . . Mr. * * * * * took me to see the 'prettiest window in Southwark,' expected to take first prize at the Red Cross Flower Show on the following Saturday. The house is up a courtway, which is part of Mr. * * * * *'s own tract district, visited by him every Sunday. It is one of several which have an effective window display of geraniums, fuchsias, creepers, and various other plants, bearing evidence of some taste and much care. We talked with the man (evidently a coster) and his wife, a fair, stoutish, respectable-looking person in early middle life, who was introduced as one of the regular attendants at the mothers' meetings, &c., held at the mission. A sharp shower coming on, we took shelter in the small front room, which was very clean and crowded with furniture, whilst prints and portraits—some in quite gorgeous frames—adorned the walls. The wife complained a good deal of the language and insults she had to put up with from her opposite neighbour because she went to the mission—jealousy of her very comfortable home being no doubt the real cause. 'Its cups of gin and cups of whisky we has there!' This was referring to the cup of tea given at the mothers' meeting. I had asked Mr. * * * * * previously if anything was given at this meeting. 'Only tea and biscuits,' he said, and excused it on the grounds that the mothers

came earlier in consequence and that the tea and biscuits were very cheap.

. . . . . We passed through the narrow alleys and winding ways near to which a great fire had originated. This fire had been an opportunity; giving an introduction to the people, of whom between two and three hundred were temporarily housed at that time and fed at the mission-buildings. With the excuse of calling on some sick persons, we entered some of the worst buildings, mounting wretchedly dark narrow stairways, and almost tumbling over groups of children in our way (it was 'between the lights'). At each place there was an exchange of greeting with the women, and a persuasive reminder given of the service at the mission, generally received with a doubtful or negative shake of the head. Only in the case of the sick, was a man ever seen or spoken to.

In another case, the missionary showed us over the rooms the mission uses; dismal rooms; and we afterwards walked through the block of buildings in which they are located. These buildings are terrible; huge, gloomy and forbidding, the courts bare and littered, a monstrous modern substitute for a home. In one of the courts an organ was playing, and crowds of children were dancing round about; their merriment and the jig of the organ in sharp and happy contrast with the surroundings.

(2) *Three Baptist Missions.*

No. 1 was started in a very small way in an ill-adapted house. A sympathetic lady who had been brought down to visit the mission, seeing the difficulties under which it laboured, built and equipped their present building. Thus, as regards structure, they are exceptionally well off, having an extensive set of rooms and no rent to pay: but there was little that was bright or warm about the place, not enough being spent on the up-keep. This is the greater pity, as the work is mainly among children. One room had been decorated for some entertainment, but this did not save the general effect of bareness and discomfort. It was an off-night except for the boys' club and gymnasium, and to this not more than a dozen were

expected. Three turned up. 'What did they like best?' I asked, and the answer was 'parallel bars,' but these, it turned out, were broken and stored away somewhere, unusable. I tried again, and the horizontal bar was given second place, and again it proved to be broken and out of use. 'Did they box?' and the answer was in the affirmative, followed by the hasty production of an exceedingly dirty pair of gloves. Altogether, not a very flourishing affair.

The hall of No. 2 is above two shops. At the top of the stairs I found a lad of eighteen, at the most. 'Is Mr. Smith here?' I asked. 'I am Mr. Smith,' was the reply, and he took me into the hall where there was another lad of about the same age. Mr. Smith, who is employed in the City, is of the type whose natural environment is the Sunday school, the Bible-class and the mission. His companion was of a different stamp, very bright, intelligent and pleasant looking, saved probably from the street and the music-hall by the efforts of some evangelist. The cheerfulness of these lads and their delight in their work was very striking. With some ten others of much the same age and class, these two youths have been carrying on this small mission work for about a year, various other attempts in the hall having failed. All, or nearly all, of them are members of the Tabernacle. There is a Sunday school of about one hundred and sixty children and a Band of Hope with half that number. The hall is occupied on Sundays and for three nights in the week. On Sunday morning there is a service for children and in the evening for adults, but for this preachers are obtained from outside, as the young people do not feel themselves equal to conducting such a service. However, the adults do not come, and usually the congregation consists of the workers only.

No. 3 is called the South London Cabdrivers' Mission. When I reached the mission hall a Gospel Temperance service, with magic lantern, was in progress. The missioner, who is known as Salvation Jack, and is proud of the name, led me into a small room behind the hall, and we were joined by one of his fellow-workers whose nickname is 'Banjo,' and after a few minutes' conversation the secretary and treasurer came in, and each has a

familiar appellation. These four, who are all members of the Tabernacle, with about eight other 'saved cabmen,' started this mission four years ago, and have continued it with occasional assistance from the Tabernacle funds. They are pleasant, earnest, cheery fellows, buoyed up by faith in work which shows few visible results. 'We don't know what we do, but the blessed Lord, He knows,' represents the spirit in which the mission is carried on. And, irrespective of results, intense pleasure is evidently found in the work. All agreed that from the spiritual point of view the cabman was a 'hard nut to crack.'

## § 2

### NOTES OF VISITS BY A BAPTIST SISTER

*November 13th to 20th.*—Thirty-six houses visited with bills and tracts, and found a few cases I shall keep up. One woman had been hoping someone would call to read and pray with her sick sister.

*November 20th to 27th.*—Found one woman who had not been able to go out for twenty-seven years on account of her leg; parish doctor attending. She has to get her living by doing for two young men lodgers. She is a Christian widow and so glad of a visit.

Another woman came to the mothers' meetings last week through the temperance meeting bills the week before, and wished she had come sooner.

Mrs. A * * * * * dying of consumption. Parish doctor hopes to be able to remove her to infirmary. Cannot get proper nourishment at home. Four little ones.

*November 27th to December 4th.*—One woman I went to see to-day in A * * * * * Street. They asked me to call to read and pray with her. She is sixty-eight years of age; quite lost the use of her legs; sits in a back room day after day. She told me she did not want to know more about the way to heaven, for her husband was a Wesleyan, but died some years ago. I read and talked to her and prayed, spending some time trying to make it clear and plain.

Another poor woman, whose husband is suffering from softening of the brain, is nearly distracted to know what to do for the best. She is a Christian woman and told me to-day that if it had not been for God's grace she should have been a drunkard to-day. She looks for me every week and for her little tract.

Another woman (old) has nothing to look forward to but a letter from a little grandson once a month, and a few tracts from me. She used to live with a daughter who she thought was married to the son-in-law, so-called, but eighteen months ago she ran away with someone else, and it was all found out. She left the youngest child behind, a baby boy two and a half years old, and the man begged the mother not to leave him, so she has been staying on, not having anyone to help her. She has only just what he likes to give her to eat—no money; ill with asthma and bronchitis. To make matters worse, the man is always drinking. Lately, the woman cannot be found, and so the old mother sits and broods over the daughter's downfall and the way she is living herself; and one feels so helpless in these cases.

* * * * *

*December 11th to 18th.*—One case I have this bitterly cold week without a bit of bed clothing, five or six little ones, the husband a labourer; not much work. The wife trying to keep her faith strong in the face of it all. My heart ached for her. I have lent two blankets out, so was unable to lend her one.

The C. O. S. case is one I have had for three months, a very mysterious one too. The place always clean and tidy, but children seemed starved, and the woman always crying and telling me they could not get food. I felt there was something in the background. We helped by giving Quaker oats and milk for the children, and then went to the C. O. S. to help if it was all straight, they having more time to investigate. I myself suspected sly drinking on the woman's part, and the C. O. S. have found out from her relations that it is so. She drinks the children's food money. We (the mission) are not helping any more. I am trying to get the man and woman to our meetings, but have only been successful once.

Mrs. B * * * * *, one of the mothers, whose husband

is a one-legged man, employed as organ blower at * * * * * * (income £5 per quarter with 4*s* 6*d* a week from another source). They are nearly starved half the time. She is a second wife, and there is a girl of twenty who is wrong in her mind, making her dependent on them, also three little children.

Mrs. C * * * * *, one of the mothers who is losing her sight, has had her husband out of work and two little ones very ill. The man has about two days a week now.

All the above are respectable people, drifting along from hand to mouth, settling down in despair.

* * * * *

*January 22nd to 29th.*—Mrs. D * * * * *, one of the old mothers, was present at the 'Old People's Tea;' she was taken in a fit on Saturday last and is now lying at death's door. The old man had nothing in the house and was not able to go to work. Mrs. X * * * * * sent 1*s*, and I was able to take 2*s* 6*d* from our mission. The C. O. S. secretary has kindly sent 6*s* on Wednesday and 6*s* to-day (Saturday), thus proving to the old couple (both Christians) that 'He never forsakes.'

Mrs. E * * * * * (one of the mothers); her husband has been at home ill for a month, with 12*s* club money coming in to support three children and a delicate wife. He worked nearly a fortnight with gastritis, but had to give in. Of course the doctor says 'Plenty of beef tea,' &c., and the landlord says 'Rent.'

Mrs. F * * * * *, another mother, very ill, lung trouble, not able to get the things she ought to have. I have been able to get warm clothing from the mission for her, but I fear consumption has set in. Husband on short time, but a steady worker.

The mother of some Sunday-school children has been ill a month, and the doctor says she will have to stay in bed eight weeks longer. She has a large family of little ones. I have been able to get a nurse to come in twice a day to make her comfortable, and have also talked the School Board officer into granting leave from school for the eldest girl until the woman is better.

* * * * *

*February 5th to 12th.*—Mrs. G * * * * *'s husband been ill for three weeks, had only just got on as auxiliary

postman after six months' waiting; nothing coming in; hopes to go to work on Monday, but the doctor is against it. People who will not let you know how much they need food; have to be right down before they tell; have seen better days.

Mrs. H * * * * *'s husband ill, influenza, was out with a funeral last Friday week, being odd man at an undertaker's. The man had nothing to help him to get well, and had nothing in the place. I persuaded her to send for the parish doctor, which she did, and the man is a little better. She is one of our mothers and a Christian woman.

*Memorandum.*—From October 19th to March 9th the Sister paid 941 visits, 83 being to sick members, 346 to mothers, 369 to outsiders and 143 others, mainly tract or bill distribution. In the course of these visits she dispensed relief to the total value of £1. 15*s* 1*d*. Milk, eggs, and bovril oftenest, bread and coals sometimes, oatmeal occasionally and meat once or twice.

## § 3

### SPECIAL MISSIONARIES AND THEIR WORK

(1) *Amongst the Dockers.*

The duty of the missionary is to visit the ships in dock, mixing with the stevedores and labourers engaged, or with others working in the docks. Much of his work is conversational and he appears frequently to be called upon to deal with objections made by cavillers against Christianity and to reconcile apparently contradictory passages of Scripture. In this work he displays a ready wit, and this opposition and questioning afford him his best opportunities. His visits follow no routine, but depend on weather and circumstances. A wet day finds him in the sheds talking to the men seeking shelter; near flood tide he may be found on the barges waiting to leave the dock, whilst at dinner time he holds a short meeting for the men. Subjoined are some characteristic extracts from his diary:—

"*Wednesday.*

"I was engaged afloat morning and afternoon, visiting lightermen. In the basin fifty-seven barges were collected previous to leaving the dock at tide time. The majority of these were manned by two lightermen and I had opportunity to speak to all. I am inclined to think a better moral tone prevails among this class than formerly. I notice especially an absence of that gross obscenity which was a characteristic of their vocabulary a year or two ago; although it is bad enough now. To-day for a wonder I have been treated with civility by nearly all. In the cabins of eighteen of the craft I have been allowed to dive, and sit by the fire while I talked sometimes to only two persons, but oftener to groups of five or six. Like an oasis in the Sahara, one of these was a professing and well-instructed Christian.

"*Thursday.*

"I had a meeting in the cabin of the steam-tug * * * * * the captain leaving his own cabin to join us. We had under consideration the subject of retributive justice in nature and grace, illustrated by Psalm cvii. 17, Luke xii. 47 and Proverbs xvi. 4. Another meeting with coal-heavers on board mail boat * * * * * followed, which was not so orderly. Another meeting with labourers on South Quay at dinner time nearly exhausted my vocal powers, and I was glad of a rest in the Dockmaster's office with only a few clerks to tear me to pieces. I finished up the afternoon in the Customs' Searchers mess room with sixteen officers, all of whom I meet frequently, and two of whom recently stepped by God's grace from darkness to light.

"*Friday.*

"Visited kitchens and refreshment rooms and did some quiet work with the cooks, waitresses and stray men at the tables. In the afternoon I visited the * * * * * liner.

"*Tuesday* (*St. Patrick's Day*).

"The Irish dock labourer is rampant to-day, and anyone who wishes to be involved in a serious row could

not do better than broach the subject of Evangelical religion. I wisely refrain to-day and confine my efforts to railway men at the Millwall."

(2) *A Lodging-house Missionary (extracts from diary).*

"*Tuesday.*

"We were busy in preparing for another party of all our poor men, who were invited to come to a good substantial meat tea at 6 o'clock. It was a sight to see them all down at their tea, and although their appetites were keen indeed, yet we had been careful that every man should have a good square meal, which consisted of ½lb. of meat with plenty of bread and butter, then ½lb. of cake with two rounds of bread and butter, the latter being handed to each man in a paper bag.

"We had one of the best meetings of the kind I have ever known after the tea. Four good addresses, four solos, and plenty of singing by the men.

"*Thursday.*

"Met a man, Daniel * * * * * who was at our last tea for men and was much impressed by what he heard. He wished to sign the temperance pledge. I had my book in my pocket, so we went into the * * * * * Library, and then he asked God to help him. He told an extraordinary story of the unfaithfulness of his wife, which had driven him to drink and caused him to lose his situation as gardener.

"*Sunday.*

"A busy programme to-day; by His grace we were able to carry it through, and I trust with profit to my own soul. Bible-class and visitation in lodging-houses in which four services were held, the men being invited to meet us at the Mission Hall, where what corresponds to an after-meeting for the whole of the services held in the homes took place. It must be a cause of thanksgiving to know that through the above efforts six hundred to seven hundred adults heard the Gospel.

"*Monday.*

"Battersea, Wandsworth Road, and Vauxhall.—A marked difference in the number of men found in these

places (*i.e.* lodging-houses) to-day. They are clearing out in all directions, and one good thing—they never come back to the same place, that is, not the majority; they scatter to the four quarters of London when they return for the winter. In the above most of the men are the 'loafer,' 'tramp' class or professional beggars, who can ape anything that is likely to suit their purpose."

(3) *In the Public-houses.*

The missionary spends his time visiting the public-houses and coffee-houses, going through his district apparently in regular order. Sunday is a great day for getting among the men, and then he generally gives two hundred or three hundred tracts away. Extracts:—

"*Monday.*

When I entered the bar there were ten men here playing cards, and others were drinking, smoking and talking together. Standing in their midst, I said, 'I have some good news for you all to-day. "Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy."' One after another they all began to ask questions; the cards and pots were pushed aside. One man, whose voice was raised above the others, cried out, 'The Bible is a bad book. I would not let a daughter of mine read it.' I replied, 'As Englishmen let us give fair play to everyone who wishes to speak. Only let one man speak at the same time.' 'That's it, master,' cried a voice, 'one dog, one bone.' One man, who spoke for most of the company, then said, 'You cannot prove to us that there is any truth or any good in the Bible.' [The missionary then went on to give proofs.]

"After this one man said, pointing to another, 'That man carries Jesus Christ on his back.' 'In what way does he do that?' 'I will show you, Sir, if you come into the taproom.' We went into the taproom and the man said, 'I have been a soldier. I went out to the Burmese war and while there I had three figures tattooed with ink on my body.' He took off his shirt and showed us these lines and figures. On his breast he had the shape of a heart drawn out

and in the centre his sweetheart and himself; then on the centre of his back he had Christ on the cross, crowned with thorns. Red ink representing the blood flowed down from the head, hands, side and feet. I asked, 'What are these figures on your arms and shoulders?' 'These on my arms are the guardian angels and these two young women on my shoulders are my other sweethearts.' It was done with artistic skill. 'Why, man, your body is a regular gallery. Now you want a living faith in a living Saviour to make you a living Christian.' 'No, I don't, I want plenty of this hop beer and then I shall be satisfied.' We went back into the bar and I said to them, 'This man has Christ crucified on his back. It is only skin deep. That is not enough. If any man has not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His.'"

Other similar, though not so lengthy accounts of conversation are recorded. Now and again the missionary is welcomed, especially in cases of sickness.

## § 4

### SUNDRY NOTES

(1) *Police note. Comparing Southwark with Notting Dale.*

Nothing could be worse than the courts off the Borough High Street and Red Cross Street, or than the area between Long Lane and Great Dover Street. A degree better, because the inhabitants regularly earn their living by honest labour, are the Friar Street area, and the poor block between Jamaica Road and the river in Rotherhithe. Even the worst of these differs, however, from Notting Dale in that their inhabitants do normally earn their living by labour. In Notting Dale the men are cadgers and earn their daily bread by begging. The Notting Dale cadger this witness held to be a peculiarity of the West End;—a product of wealth, idleness, and ignorance that is found only in the neighbourhood of

Hyde Park. In South London there are no parallel conditions, unless it be at Brixton, but there wealth is coupled with business training. 'The cadger has no chance with the business man, and he knows it.' In the Southwark division there are no street beggars. 'You might walk up and down the Borough High Street for a year without being asked for a penny,' and it is not that there is not plenty of poverty in the neighbourhood.

(2) *Building in Bermondsey.*

. . . . . As we walked through the street a middle-aged man in his shirt sleeves came up and talked. He proved to be a builder in a small way of business whose workshop was near. He lives and works in the district and has known it for twenty-eight years. He would be glad to see the whole of the poorer quarters pulled down, for he could fill his houses time and again with good City people if it were not for the poor; the Tower Bridge has made the City so accessible. He owns a lot of property here, and has houses also at Poplar and at East Ham. At East Ham he can give five rooms for *7s 6d*; for the same accommodation here, without a garden, he gets *11s*, and, if the poor property were down, could obtain *13s* or *14s* for these houses.

(3) *A children's party at Rotherhithe Free Church.*

. . . . . The infants were having a New Year's entertainment (16th January, 1900), and while we talked I could hear them singing 'Ring a ring of roses.' And after the interview we joined them. There were some three hundred or four hundred children, mostly from five to eight years old, who were dancing round the hall eating apples and oranges. Then they got into their seats for a magic lantern. The leader went on to the platform: 'What would they sing?' and he started 'There was a farmer had a dog.' The children did not emphasize 'Bing-O' to his satisfaction, and he showed them how, and next time they nearly raised the roof with the last syllable. Then the children clamoured for him to sing them 'Ten little niggers.' He sang a version of his own, but all joined in the usual chorus to this most popular song. Then followed the lantern pictures over which the

youngsters were kept in roars of laughter. The hall, used as a church, is a big, bare building with a high platform, and without the least attempt at ornament. It is turned to this purpose or to that—entertainment, Sunday school or religious service—by rapid rearrangement of the benches.

(4) *A Priest and his flock.*

. . . . . A man was supposed to have insulted the priest, who next day met one of his stalwarts. 'Mornin' F'thurr: I've bin waitin fur ye. Two of us 'ave got him down there by the river, all right, the chap that insulted you, and we want to know what we shall do wid him.' . . . . .

(5) *Notes by the Headmaster of a poor Board School, on changes,* 1882-1900.

*Parents in relation to teachers:*—Much more friendly; hostility, insolence, violence or threats, common in 1882, now hardly ever occur. No personal case experienced for the last three years.

*Parents in relation to children:*—Less violent ill-treatment as shown by bruises and wounds; more effort that the children shall appear respectable, especially noticeable among the girls.

*Parental responsibility:*—An increasing tendency to shirk troublesome duties; to say of a child 'he won't come to school,' or to request punishment of children for insubordination at home.

*The boy of* 1880 *as compared with the boy of* 1900:—Much more docile; insubordination, then endemic, now almost unknown, and if it occurs very likely to be the fault of the teacher. Cheerful and eager now, then often sullen and morose. Relations with teachers generally friendly, often affectionate—no street-calling after them or stone-throwing as there used to be. All this, the result of discipline and control at school, reacts beneficially on the home. Truancy almost extinct and when occurring there is generally something in the blood to explain it. Theft rather common, but perhaps more often detected owing to better supervision.

*Personal cleanliness* :—Greatly improved; verminous cases among boys rare, but among girls almost universal, due to their long hair. Out of thirty examined, twenty-eight required attention. As to dirt it is necessary to distinguish between recent dirt got at play and the ancient kind that gives the tramp smell. Swimming is taught and has a good effect. The really dirty, seen when stripped, would not be allowed to bathe, but would be sent home to wash there first. This now seldom happens. The vermin referred to are lice; bugs are rarely seen; but fleas are common, especially on children coming from homes where there is a baby.

*Obscene language* :—Common both in the street and in the home, but not common in the school where, if disagreeable words are heard, they are checked.

*Obscene conduct* :—Very rare. As to boys and girls, the latter are the aggressors.

(6) *Another poor Board School.*

. . . . . Verminous children are not common in the school and when they are found a threat to report usually results in reform. There is a wholesome dread of the officers of the R.S.P.C.C. The cases of cruelty take the form of neglect, resulting in starvation and filth, much more often than of active cruelty. Attendance is low. Infectious disease is continual in the school and another cause is the large number of children who work for long hours out of school. Filthy as is the language which the children hear and habitually use in the streets, the writing of obscene words on the closet walls is very rare here, in fact almost unknown, whereas at more respectable schools it is a constant trick. It may be that there is no impulse to write things which are 'common in the mouth as household words.'

# SYLLABUS OF THE ENTIRE WORK

# Life and Labour of the People in London

## (CHARLES BOOTH)

---

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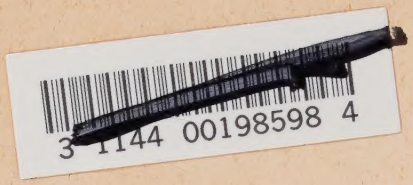
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